The Martyred Towns Of France

Clara E. Laughlin

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G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
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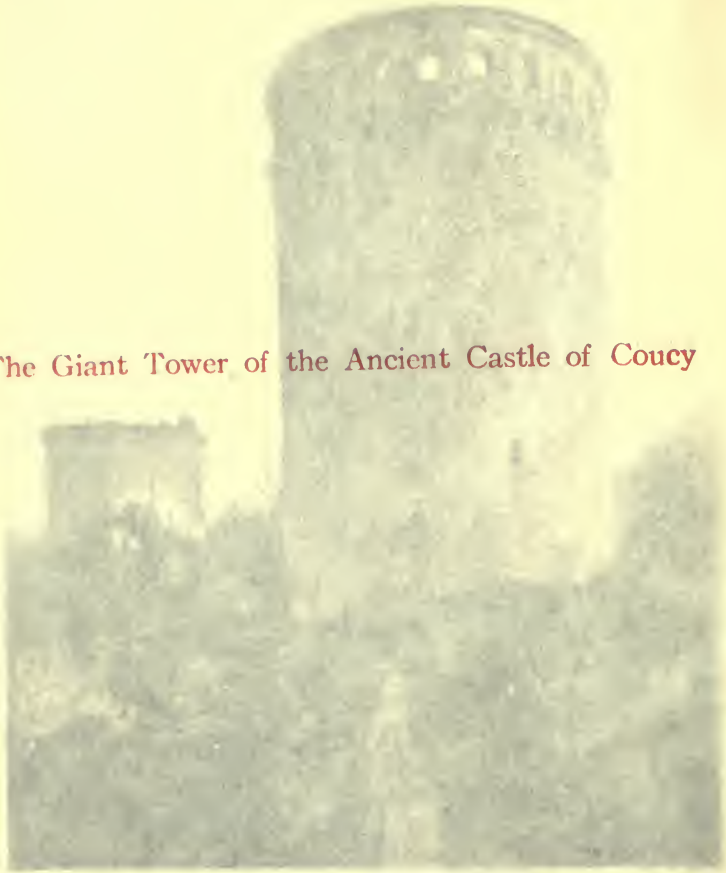

The Giant Tower of the Ancient Castle of Coucy

The Martyred Towns of France

By

Clara E. Laughlin

Author of

"The Heart of Her Highness," "Everybody's Lonesome," etc.

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CLARA E. LAUGHLIN

To

M. ANTONIN BARTHÉLEMY

WITH GRATEFUL APPRECIATION OF HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO THE UNION BETWEEN FRANCE AND HER SISTER REPUBLIC

PREFACE

IN one sense, all the towns of France were martyred in the Great War; not one of them that did not pour out her life-blood to bear witness to the faith that is in France and to enable mankind to live more freely, more abundantly.

But the towns whose history, whose "personality," I endeavour to sketch in the ensuing chapters, are some of those which have paid a price greater than the shedding of blood and of tears, for the world's salvation. They are towns which have endured the hot shame of occupation; the wrenching agony of deportations; the torment of unceasing bombardment; the blood-lustful massacre of innocents; the bestial spoliation of womanhood; the barbaric fury of destruction-for-destruction's sake; the worse-than-barbaric assaults of an enemy bent upon the enslavement of the human race and the obliteration of all that memorialized its long, slow struggle upward toward self-mastery.

There can be no doubt of Germany's intent not merely to terrorize France, in the immediate interest of subjugating her and the ultimate interest of holding her in subjection, but also to denude her of inanimate things which might remind her of the centuries when she was working out her salvation. To break France's spirit was the German aim, quite as much as to plunder her of her riches; to demolish all that perpetuated

France's proud traditions, and plunge her into the same sort of blackness, feeling nothing behind her and nothing before, that Germany had brought to Rome and, through Rome, to the world, when she extinguished the lights of antiquity and made the night of the Dark Ages.

We know, now, that the hate Germany let loose upon those towns of France she was able to reach was the expression of a long-cherished determination to supersede French civilization and to consign it to oblivion. For generations her peon-pedants had been declaring (and proving!) that there never had been any civilization in France. All Germans were convinced; but there were others who found it difficult to deny persistent evidence—evidence that France had been the theatre wherein the drama of evolving human rights and human obligations was more consistently, more ardently, and more effectively played than in any other.

"Very well! let us," they said, "destroy that evidence: in architecture, in archives, in art, in social customs, in industry—wherever we find it. Then, when our tale is told in history—our tale that France, emasculate, degenerate, perished miserably of her own unfitness, before the irresistible advance of our robust *Kultur*—there will be nothing left to raise questioning regrets in any minds of the morrow. Our scholars succeeded in making most of the world believe that our savagery was God's providence in the destruction of Rome. They can do as much for our destruction of France. But the fewer 'remains' left for posterity to sentimentalize, the better for our purpose this time!"

It was characteristic of their brutish stupidity that they recognized no essential difference between the soul of France and the soul of pagan Rome dying the death of Babylon.

That there was something in France they could neither kill nor enslave, was beyond their power of comprehension.

So they did what they could—never doubting that it would be enough.

Today, they themselves are beaten, outcast, despised, staggering under debt, hunger gnawing at their vitals, anarchy and terrorism regnant in their "model cities," their vaunted efficiency and organization gone with the mailed fist that held them together for its benefit, not theirs.

And France sits enthroned among the nations—not for her sorrows chiefly; nor for her sacrifices; nor for her courage; but because in her supreme stress she has revealed to the world qualities of heart, of mind, of soul, which prove that her people who knew how to die so well, knew also many things about how to live—things which we all now, are asking her to teach us.

To know France, one must have acquaintance with her far beyond that which the average visitor to her in years gone by ever attempted.

One lifetime is, indeed, too brief for Paris—but not for the Paris most sojourners there know. Yet Paris is truly the heart of France only to those who know the provinces.

And beyond Paris, "tourist Paris" at that, those parts of France best known to the majority of travellers are Trouville, the Riviera, the châteaux of the Loire

("done" in three days or thereabouts), with Rouen and Amiens as seen in a brief "stop-over" en route to or from Havre or Calais.

It is astounding, how many persons there are who went yearly to France and never saw Reims.

Writers and illustrators were, indeed, wont to adventure farther afield, in search of "something new to write about" or to sketch for publication.

But they had a "liability to architecture" (easy to understand, easy to forgive, but not always easy to "follow") which tends to give many readers the uncomfortable impression that the joy of journeying in French provinces depends largely on the ability to tell Romanesque from ogival and remember whether the clerestory is above or below the triforium.

Appreciation of architecture is one of the major joys of life. So high do I rate it that if one had to choose between appreciation of music and appreciation of the builders' art I think I should choose the latter. (For the "savage breast" may be charmed by music the savage head cannot comprehend; whereas the great epics of architecture really demand some sort of special education.) Viollet-le-Duc's dictionary of architecture is more fascinating to me than most novels.

Yet the truth is that the majority of Americans (and probably of Britishers) not only do not know a flying buttress from a flèche, but are so bewildered by the technicalities wherewith these things are usually discussed that they entirely miss the real interests which lie therein, and do not even comprehend the difference between a cathedral and an abbey church.

For this reason it is regrettable that so much of the comparatively small amount that has been written in English about provincial France is devoted to the

minute study of cathedrals, cloisters, and châteaux from an architectural point of view and not with reference to what those glorious remains should tell us of "France in the making."

I had not realized how little about French towns there is available for the reader limited to English and only measurably reactive to discussions of Gothic and Flamboyant, until people began asking me where they could learn this and that about the theatre of war.

One result of my efforts to direct such inquirers is the access of temerity which enables me to offer this book. Five years ago I should have said that one of the last things I would ever presume to do would be to write a book about France. She seemed so well supplied! But French scholars of the highest distinction have been as encouraging to me in this undertaking as have indulgent American friends.

France herself, I am told, is fostering a revival of interest in the history of her towns and smaller cities. She feels that it is highly important to her tomorrows that the largest possible number of her citizens and of her friends shall comprehend the story of her yesterdays. She has, indeed, some idea of redistricting—of abandoning the arbitrary departmental divisions of the Revolutionary government, and returning to her old provinces, with their local pride and local traditions, which the first Republic broke up in the interests of centralization. Now France feels herself too centralized; she believes that her government would be better (and not less well) served by a revival of the old provincial spirit newly attuned to the needs of today. She knows, now, how well-founded is her state; and like the wise mother she is, she wants to put her children more and more upon their own mettle

—to decrease, gradually, their dependency upon the governmental machinery at Paris, and increase their individual choice and responsibility.

It is my privilege not only to have travelled a very great deal in France, but to have been all my life an ardent reader of French history—first the history of French personages, and then the history of the French people.

The first idol that ever came to me out of the past to rule my heart was a French queen—Marie Stuart; the next was a French peasant from the marches of Lorraine—the maid of Domremy. And when I was only six, France herself made me captive to her charms.

The past has never seemed far away to me, in France I could always feel expectant to hear Charlemagne's hunting horn in the forest of Compiègne, much more readily than I could think I saw Lafayette revisiting my native city (New York) when my grandmother was a bride.

And, latterly, the romance of France's story has disclosed to me many deep significances I had hitherto not perceived. Events in the past five years have brought out values which no one could possibly have known how to appreciate in the decades before the war.

France's history no longer seems episodic, not to say mercurial; the steady progression of it throughout a score of centuries is of tremendous import, today, and superb encouragement.

So, I have endeavoured to make that history speak to those who may care to heed it, in these pages which (it is, doubtless, unnecessary to say) are written for the average sort of American reader interested in France now as never before.

Every one of these chapters is made from material which would fill a volume much more graciously than it compresses within a few pages. But life is short, and very full. Most of us cannot read volumes about anything, even about French cities. And my hope for this book is that it may find its way, as a traveller's companion, into the places of which the late war has made shrines for all humanity; there to supplement the guide-books and help pilgrims to worship as they should.

I know, not from a single visit to them but from many, nearly all the battlefields of the Western Front, and nearly (if not quite) all the occupied and bombarded towns.

Always it has been my custom to collect, when in a town, its local histories, the proud work of its own annalists past and present, transcripts of its most noted archives, and monographs about its most celebrated monuments of the past.

Year after year I came back from Europe laden with this "queer" luggage, to the despair of my patient, apartment-dwelling family. I used sometimes to think that I must be the only American who ever disturbed the somnolence of custodians in record offices and manuscript rooms, and the keepers of shops that were like the Saragossa Sea of forgotten pamphlets.

All this I did solely for my own delight, with never a thought of "copy." I had no reason to guess, when I was revelling in the legends and traditions and authenticated history of those old towns where my countryfolk seldom or never went, that on them would be focussed for crucial years the breathless interest of the world, and that they would presently become the places to which millions of persons ardently long to go.

In the years since 1914, I have read a vast number of articles and books about the French battle area, and heard a great number of lectures given by persons returned therefrom. Nearly all of them were disappointing; most of them gave a minimum of information and a maximum of personal experience—and personal experiences in the devastated area were extremely lacking in variety. After a while I began to console myself for repeated disappointments, by making myself reflect that the writers and talkers had known nothing, before the war, of those towns and their traditions, their treasures. They went on hasty tours under military escort (quite bored escort, doubtless) and saw here a heap of rubble and there a smoking village, and yon a gaping church or a row of houses stripped of their façades. And of this they gave some account, of a verbal "snap-shot" variety.

Of course the accounts were depressing, as the sights they described were unspeakably depressing.

But invaded France is more than a succession of rubble-heaps. Those regions have been laid waste many, many times—by the same enemy—and each time have lost beautiful memorials which never could be replaced. This time the wanton ravage has been the greatest in all the world's history of war. But any one who thinks about northern and eastern France merely as an area of desolation endeavouring to rise from its ashes, misses what I can only (after years of deliberation on it and comparison of it with other histories) characterize as the greatest epic of civilization: the indomitable struggle of a people almost ceaselessly at war through twenty centuries with the despoiler from beyond the Rhine, yet steadily—in the midst of strife and in the pauses between invasions—

building the great Temple of human rights, human liberties, human obligations, which no Teutonic torch or bomb can destroy.

It is with the hope of helping some Americans to see in the martyred towns of France not only that which remains to the eye of the body but that which lingers in memory, and that which bides, unenshrined but omnipresent, in the immortal soul of a great people, that I have written these chapters.

Not a tithe of what I would like to say is in them. But if there is enough even to suggest what one may see who views France in comprehending retrospect, I shall feel that I have rendered a service to a few of my countrymen and—perhaps—paid a small portion of my immeasurable debt to France.

C. E. L.

Chicago, August, 1919.

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The Martyred Towns of France

I

SOISSONS

WHEN mankind gave up, in great measure, travel by road with all its freedom to linger or push on or to alter courses, and yielded to the arbitrariness of steel rails and time-tables, they gained much —unquestionably—but they lost much, also. They were not slow in realizing this. Steam travel did not begin to be at all general until the middle of the nineteenth century and by the time that century reached its last decade the longing for open roads and freedom of exploration had developed the bicycle and was dreaming of the automobile.

I am far from undervaluing railways, far from wishing to live in a world they do not serve. But there are times when "getting there" isn't half so important as "going there" in countries where every place along one's route is so distractingly lovely that one scarcely cares whether he reaches his destination at all.

Once upon a time, on a morning in earliest August, I left Reims to go to Pierrefonds.

The world was very green and gold and blue. The hillsides of Champagne almost purred with the gladness of the vineyards soaking up sunshine to give forth again in sparkling wine. The old Roman highway stretched ahead of us broad and white and tree-shaded,

with scarcely a swerve for miles and miles. Beautiful France seemed to hum with the content that comes of love and labour and thrift in the midst of bounty and beauty.

It was past noon, and we had a luncheon hamper laden with "goodies" from Rumpelmayer's. We were on the lookout for a place to spread our feast—and in a country where they till almost everything but the middle of the road, that wasn't always easy.

Louis, who drove us so many thousands of miles in France, was skirting the edge of a town, to "pick up" the south-leading road for Pierrefonds, and three pairs of eyes besides his were scanning the roadsides for a level, grassy, shady spot where neither we nor the car would be in anybody's way, and the dust from innumerable market-returning carts (it was Saturday) wouldn't be too thick upon our sandwiches.

Suddenly I cried out: "Oh! Look!"

Off on the right, towering into the blue, blue sky, far above the dense greenery of tall and ancient trees, were two spires of transcendent loveliness. Like richest lace they were, in the fairy delicacy of their tracery in stone, and through myriad meshlike piercings we could glimpse bits of summer sky—enhanced, thereby, like pink flesh seen through cobwebby mechlin.

Of course we went at once to investigate. And on closer view the thrill was even greater. There was a superb façade, worthy of any cathedral. But the great rose window over the main portal was only a frame for noonday blue—even the tracery was gone—and through the gaping doorways below, one gazed far off above the waving tops of trees.

Back of that majestic pair of towers there was nothing but the smiling land of France, watered in sweetness by the gentle-flowing Aisne.

That façade and the exquisite old cloisters are all that remains of the celebrated Abbey of St. John of the Vines, where Thomas à Becket spent nine years.

I can't remember where or when we ate our luncheon that day. I'm not sure we ate it; though I suppose we did. But it was thus we "discovered" Soissons, which people have been discovering since long before Greece was in its Golden Age.

Shepherds watched their grazing flocks here in the morning mists of European history, and maintained on the river banks a pastoral colony housed in scattered huts. And other people had been here before them.

Nearly all the struggles whereby France for more than two thousand years has wrought her destiny have written some pages in the history of Soissons. But many of them were essentially the same struggle which took on some more dramatic, more memorable form elsewhere and has, in these chapters, been related in connection with the city that best epitomized it.

So I am going to deal, here, especially with Soissons's very early days when it was the chief town of Belgian Gaul; and let it give you an idea of what sort of life was here in the far-away times long before the Romans came. We have derived so much from that primitive, almost prehistoric, state of society, that without some knowledge of it we cannot comprehend as we should the significance of many things in the story of France as it unfolds through the ages.

A very long, long time before we went journeying from east to west and "discovered" Soissons, there were others who came that same way—many others, successively, but among them a people called the Celts —and this is what they found:

A country densely forested and with few clearings;

a country of many rivers but no navigation, no embankments to prevent great overflows when the streams were swollen, and no bridges even of the rudest sort. There were vast areas of woodland swamps or bogs; and beasts: perhaps the last of the mammoths were still there, and rhinoceroses and hippopotami; certainly huge bears, wild bulls, moose, hyenas, and great felines of a sort more ferocious even than the lions and tigers of today. No jungle denser than that in which these creatures roamed survives anywhere to these times.

For protection against the beasts of the jungle and against the more-or-less human beings who roved about, those people whom the Celts found at Soissons had learned that the best way to live in a little colony was to drive piles in a lake, some distance from shore, build a platform on the piles, and erect their huts on the platform. A rude bridge of wood was their means of communication with the mainland; and it was so constructed that they could pull it up and cut the communication, at night or on the approach of danger —anticipating the drawbridge of feudal times by much more than a thousand years. Fish were abundant beneath their citadel; the supply of food and water was inexhaustible, and a state of siege could be supported almost indefinitely.

Those people knew how to shape arrowheads of flint; how to make needles of bone and to sew garments, how to weave wool and flax, how to fashion rude potteries. They had domesticated a number of animals, including the horse, the dog, the sheep, goat, pig, and cow. They had learned how to sow millet and barley, and to make a sort of unleavened bread of meal and water rolled thin and cooked in the fire they lighted with flints. They had some sort of tribal organization;

and they had a religious life probably very strong; for, as nearly as we can reckon, they are the people who set up "the great stones" like those at Stonehenge and Carnac.

The Celts doubtless exterminated a great many of these people, and enslaved the rest.

We don't know just where the Celts came from, but they brought with them a social life somewhat more highly organized than that they found near Soissons (and in other parts of north-western Gaul), and evolved one which has left many traces, not material (for of these hardly any survive), but immaterial and imperishable.

Their exact stage of evolution when they reached the vicinity of Soissons, we do not know; they were still migratory; but whether they had developed something like family ties and tribal organization, or were still running in a pack much like wolves, we cannot say. We only know that they seem to have liked the country we now call northern France so well that they settled there (about the time Rome was in her infancy) and soon began to work out a very interesting state of society.

At first they had a degree of equality which would delight a Bolshevik; they were all free men and all equal. When they wanted someone to "boss," someone to do the chores that warriors disdained, they had the women, and they had the slaves—people of other tribes they had conquered in war.

As they began to feel the need of one man to represent the tribe, to transact general affairs, they resorted to the election of a chief, who stood in the relation of a father to a large family. Everyone in the tribe was reckoned a relative of everyone else, including the chief;

and all land belonged to the tribe, indivisibly. Theoretically there was no private property and no caste. But, actually, the strongest warriors, coming home with captured horses or sheep or agricultural implements, did *not* hand them over to be common goods; they kept them for private property. And as time went on there were a few who had a great many possessions, and many who had none at all. The latter worked on the communal land; but they could not compete with their "brothers" who had many more facilities. As their disadvantage grew, they had more and more to obligate themselves to "the big fellows." So presently there were "nobles" who claimed the land was theirs; and the rest of those who called themselves the lords' "cousins" were poor relations in varying degrees.

The best of those poor relations became their lord's warriors, his "knights"; they lived at his table, shared all his fortunes of war, and when he died killed themselves beside his body or delivered themselves up to the flames of his funeral pyre.

The next best became artisans who worked to equip and maintain the chief and his brothers in arms; and lastly there were the agricultural labourers whose condition was little better than that of slaves, save that they could not be sold away from the soil.

The nobles grew more and more powerful—so powerful, and so jealous of one another, that they would not submit themselves to a chief or king, but ruled the tribe through a "house of lords," which they called a senate but which was hereditary, not elective. So fearful were they of a "coalition" that two members of one family were not permitted to sit in this ruling council.

The senate sufficed for all governmental business

except when there was war impending; then the war council met, composed of all the nobles and all their "knights."

Here was a society almost exactly duplicated many centuries later, in the feudal era—even to the power of the priesthood.

These priests were Druids. Most of them were members of the noble families (not necessarily "younger sons," because there was no law of primogeniture and if any child was favoured in the division of goods it was likely to be the last-born, to whom the parental home was bequeathed) who preferred the priesthood to a career of arms. Their preparation was long; for fifteen or twenty years they studied, in some solitude —in the forest, among the mountain fastnesses, or on an island in the sea. All that they had to learn was verbally imparted to them; the Druids had no scrolls. They studied religion and law; they studied the stars and the planets; they studied mathematics; they studied "magic." They became not priests alone but judges, medicine men, soothsayers, and the instructors of the young.

They were not forbidden to marry, but they seldom did marry. They realized that their power was greater when they lived apart and maintained an air of withdrawnness. They wore a long white robe, were shod with sandals, and carried a white wand. They paid no taxes, were exempt from war, and were admitted to the councils where public affairs were deliberated.

They were judges of both civil and criminal courts; inheritance and all property settlements were made by them; they pronounced sentence for all wrongdoing. And they had the power of excommunication, which

was their strongest weapon for enforcing obedience among the haughty nobles.

So profound was the faith in a future life fostered by their teaching, that when a criminal condemned to be slain or burnt as an offering to God escaped, it was not unusual for an innocent person voluntarily to take his place and thereby make his entry sooner into the so much better life beyond. When the Romans came they called the Gauls "the people who do not fear death."

The Druids taught belief in one Supreme Being; but they humoured the people's desire for diversified worship by permitting them to supply the Supreme Being with a family—usually a wife and a son. A cult very like the Madonna cult was popular among the Celts, and such monuments of theirs as remain to us frequently show a goddess-mother with a little man-child on her knees.

There was a Druid pontiff who was elected by all the priests, and who ruled the order from a throne. There was an order of lay-brothers, which did menial work and taught religion to the common people. And there were secluded orders of priestesses.

One other class there was that seems to be worthy of mention here because we find it so closely duplicated long, long afterwards: the bards

The bards sang for the priests on certain occasions, but were not affiliated with them. They had a lay corporation of their own. They played on a small harp (probably like the Irish harp we know) and sang songs of the nobles' great exploits and of the glory of the tribe. Sometimes they aroused the fighting passions of their noble patrons and sent them forth bent on conquest; again, they had to calm their too belli-

cose moods. The person of the bard was inviolable, even on the battlefield. He was the herald-at-arms and carried challenges. He was able to give protection almost like sanctuary to the unfortunate. And, on occasions, he contended against other bards, in a great assembly, for the prize awarded the best song.

The Celts had many festivals to which ours closely correspond. November first was their day for honouring all the dead; about the time of our Christmas they had a holiday of song and dancing, in which the mistletoe (sacred to them) figured. At the New Year they exchanged gifts. Near the date on which St. John's Eve is still picturesquely celebrated in many countries, the Celts were wont to light fires on the mountains with an effect which must have been not unlike that I have seen in Tyrol. There was one of their holidays that was marked by the exchange of eggs.

There were no roads in Gaul—only footpaths. The people lived in huts of wood or of dried mud, without windows; there was a single door in each hut, and a hole in the roof to let the smoke out. Beside the door hung the heads of wolves and wild boars and also of human enemies fallen to the master's spear or bow. Beds were of straw or of the skins of beasts, or of both. When eating, the Celts sat on bundles of hay, and tore their portion of food from the main supply, using no implements but their hands and their strong white teeth. Even the nobles had few refinements of life, few luxuries. Sometimes they owned vases of gold or silver, and their women had rich clothing. But they seem to have known little about furniture.

The men wore trousers of a sort, and a peculiar kind of shoe which the Romans called *gauloises*, from which we have our word *galoshes;* also a brilliantly coloured

shawl like the Scotch plaid. (This was a peace-time costume. In battle they often divested themselves of everything but their shield, their casque, their lance or sword, and an identifying collaret to show their rank.)

The women of the people dressed themselves in a chemise and robe. The wives and daughters of the nobles bathed in beer to make their skin white, powdered their faces with chalk, blacked their eyebrows with soot, reddened their cheeks with vermilion. Men and women alike washed their hair in limewater to make it reddish.

The Celts were a people of medium height and rather stocky build, with hazel eyes, light chestnut hair, and skin neither so dark as that of the tribes south of them nor so fair as that of the tribes north of them.

They were fairly good agriculturalists and not a little ingenious. They were the first to use wheels; they made barrels of wood to hold their wine, replacing the old jars; they found out how to leaven bread by using yeast made from the waste of beer; they understood something about fertilizing soil; and so on.

The father of a family had the power of life and death over his wife and children. Wives were not bought, but came bringing a *dot*. They inherited a part of all the property acquired by their husbands after their marriage. A man could have as many wives as he was able to afford, and the leading men usually had many. The numerous widows of a chief sometimes immolated themselves on his funeral pyre.

These are, of all the successive peoples who ruled at Soissons, they of whom I would have you specially aware when you are there either in body or in imagination. They may typify for you the Gauls of practically

all the part of France we deal with in these chapters. Some of the Belgæ, whose capital Soissons was, were of different origin and had some different customs. And in other parts of Gaul, especially as it approached "the Province" (Provençe), the Rhone, and the Mediterranean, the influence of Rome was strong.

But no Gallic people have left traces so many and so strong on our American life, as those Celts who, in northern France, in Ireland, in Scotland, and, to a lesser extent, in England, so ineffaceably influenced the human epic that neither Roman nor Vandal nor Hun nor Frank nor any of their successors could obliterate their mould.

Imagine, at Soissons, a council of war when all the nobles of the Belgæ and all their "knights" voted to invade Albion (England); and see them setting out, thousands strong, along the rude paths their feet had trod and their chariot wheels had widened. See the Druid priests in their white robes blessing the departing warriors; and hear the bards chanting of certain conquest, as they march with the army.

See them as they assemble, in 52 B.C., five thousand strong, to go to the aid of Vercingetorix, in his vain effort against Cæsar.

Then came the new order of things!

Under Roman dominion Soissons was called Augusta Suessonum, and it enjoyed autonomy, together with many benefits of Roman civilization. New ramparts replaced the old fortifications; huts gave place to handsome dwellings and to palaces; an arsenal was built, and an imperial château, and a temple of Isis, and probably a coliseum. Also, many roads were built, arteries of communication.

Three important roads crossed at Soissons, just as

they do now; so that the town lay in the path of those going east and west, those going north and south, and those coming down from what is now known as Belgium, by way of Laon, to Paris.

Soissons liked its new estate so much, and was so happy in its fidelity to Rome, that for more than three centuries she had, like the traditional happy woman, no history.

Then came strife, with the introduction of Christianity and Rome's persecutions. But faith in the Nazarene soon triumphed over faith in Isis; and from very early times Soissons was a great centre of religious education.

So impressed was the terrible Attila by the prayerful entreaties of Soissons's bishop, that he spared the town and its inhabitants from destruction. (Fancy the modern Attila moved to mercy by a bishop's pleas!)

It was under the walls of Soissons that Clovis won the decisive victory over the other Frankish chief, Syagrius, which gave him sole dominion over the people who were to rule France for centuries.

Indeed, Soissons may be called the cradle of France. It was there that the Frank dynasty rose and fell; and there that Pepin, the father of Charlemagne, assumed the crown and inaugurated a new era in Europe. There, also, Charlemagne's unhappy son was kept prisoner by his greedy and impatient heirs.

The sad celebrity of Soissons in all times has been for the number and ferocity of the sieges it has endured. One of the most terrible was in May, 1414, when the French retook the place from the Duke of Burgundy and made such a massacre and such a scattering of the inhabitants that in the city of after-years there was not a single family whose ancestors had lived in Soissons before that siege.

How many times the city changed hands between 1414 and 1541 when Charles V took it, I am not sure, but I know of six. It suffered severely in the religious wars, but the Revolution touched it more lightly than most French cities.

In 1814 Napoleon defended himself heroically a Soissons against the Russians—but unavailingly.

In 1870 the Prussians took it. In the late war, Soissons was continuously under bombardment during the whole duration of hostilities. The devastation of those years was frightful. I have before me as I write many photographs of the ruins. Also before me is an old book with brown stains on its once white pages, like the "liver patches" on the once white hands of an elderly *grande dame.* It was published in Paris in 1845; and I quote a prophetic passage from the concluding paragraphs about Soissons:

"Soissons," it says, "will never escape its grand and perilous destiny; today as in the fifth century and as in the fifteenth, and as in all the later wars, it is the key of France; and it is around these ramparts that there will manœuvre eternally the army defending this territory and the enemies attacking it. Soissons guards the Aisne, and, in consequence, guards Paris."

How well it guarded Paris, and, in consequence, the civilization and the liberties of the world, is a chapter of Soissons history that I would like to write here; but its essential facts all the world knows.

And if we are to see in France, among the martyred towns, not ruins merely but reminders of deathless yesterdays, it is, really, much more important for us to think of the Celts, in their old capital, than of the recent barbarians.

II

AMIENS

WITH the single exception of Reims, none of the towns included within the scope of this book attained as Gallo-Roman cities anything like the size, importance, or splendour of the cities in south-eastern France.

But Amiens was a capital of considerable importance when Julius Cæsar, soon after he took it, convoked there a general assembly of all Gaul.

He tells us that he left three legions (that is to say, eighteen thousand infantry and their supporting troops) there to preserve authority and prevent revolt.

A hundred years later, three thousand Roman soldiers sufficed to garrison the whole vast region of transalpine Gaul; and soon thereafter not even those were necessary—and Rome could (and did) concentrate her troops "along the frontier of the Rhine," to hold the Germans east of it where they belonged.

The process by which Rome assimilated Gaul into the Empire is so interesting that I am going to recall a few points of it here, in this chapter on Amiens, to freshen the memory of readers who may not have given much thought to such things since they were in school.

The famous "three parts" into which "all Gaul" was divided were really four: "the Province" (Pro-

vençe), Aquitania, Lyonnais, and Belgium—the first under the authority of the Roman senate, and the other three directly subject to the emperor. As time went on, the emperors made new subdivisions of their territory, in the interest of easier government, until there were seventeen provinces and sixty "cities"; a city was not only the capital of a people but all their territory—sometimes as much in extent as one of the present departments of France.

And these "cities" were of three categories: there were the "allies" of Rome which had not resisted her conquest, like Reims; and there were twelve "free cities" (including Soissons) which for one reason and another were allowed to conserve their ancient laws and govern themselves in a large degree; lastly there were the subject cities whose opposition to Rome cost them dear in severity and tribute.

This plan fostered jealousy among the conquered; and in the disunion of jealousy and competition, Rome sought (and found) the minimum of difficulty in maintaining her sway.

But she was in many things—probably in most—a very wise mistress; and she was quick to reward increasing loyalty by granting increased rights. She had many privileges to bestow, and she was lavish of them in return for devotion to her imperial interests.

The nobles were particularly eager to become part of the great world of Rome—part of her splendour and of her power—and the ambition of the richest and most influential among them was to become a senator of Rome. Many attained this dignity; and therewith became patrons or patricians of their people, in whose affairs, however, they took little interest save as part of the vast business of the Empire. Those nobles who

failed of this supreme gratification became members of the senate of their own people.

The middle classes, which had not been numerous or prosperous in most parts of Gaul, became large and rich under the Roman rule and the Roman love of luxury; merchants, manufacturers, men of the professions, became local senators, municipal magistrates, and the like.

Soon the Latin tongue became general, and Roman fashions in clothes, homes, amusements, prevailed in all walks of life. There was a great influx into the towns, where in the early years of Roman dominion building went on quite furiously and trade prospered prodigiously. The Gallo-Roman nobles, whose immediate ancestors had slept on straw pallets and sat on bundles of hay when eating their meals, had palatial town houses, colonnaded, terraced, balustraded, with mosaic floors and marble walls and galleries of paintings and libraries full of Latin prose and poetry; they had gardens with fountains and many statues; and for the maintenance of these and for body-service to the family, they kept an army of slaves, of valets and tailors and dressmakers and cooks and hairdressers. In addition to his town house every noble had one or more country estates; his land was worked for him by a multitude of slaves and an even greater number of men called *colons* who were of a class better off than slaves in that they could not be sold away from the land, like a pig or cow, but belonged on it and with it; also, *colons* were permitted to marry (and slaves were not) and their family ties were respected. They could not leave the land; they could not move into town, nor become soldiers, priests, or artisans; there were laws for bringing them back if they became fugitive. As

has been said of them, they were an immovable property, whereas the slave was a movable property. However, they were citizens; they could become landowners, under their proprietor; they could bring suit in courts of justice; and they could become soldiers of the Empire if they were called, though not of their own choice.

The fine roads wherewith Rome soon covered Gaul made intercommunication between all parts of the Empire easy; there was governmental postal service on these roads, and a system of relay stations for changing horses. A product of any part of Rome's domains passed with little difficulty to any other part. And not only merchandise from the south and from the east became common in the part of Gaul that chiefly interests us in these chapters, but the northern peoples were taught many forms of manufacture new to them, and supplied with a great variety of new agricultural products.

I am asking you to think of Amiens first as a Gallo-Roman city because it serves as well as any of the towns we deal with here (except Reims, about which there is so much else to say) to illustrate the sort of things that went on in northern Gaul under the Cæsars.

The Cæsars had an imperial palace at Amiens, and nearly all of them sojourned there more or less. The city had a great circus, in their days, a temple to Jupiter and one to Mercury (with others, doubtless, that we do not know about but can conjecture), and at least one triumphal arch adorned with sculpture representing Romulus and Remus. In all probability, too, it was well supplied with luxurious baths, theatres, and other provisions such as Rome made for the delight of her townfolk. Also, Amiens had an imperial mint, and more than one imperial armoury.

Workmen who desired entrance into the latter had to go before the governor of the province and demonstrate their ability by fashioning "a masterpiece" of armour. After being accepted as qualified they became exempt from all maintenance expense and were paid a wage out of the imperial treasury; but they were branded on the arm, and could not leave their forges nor obtain their liberty unless they had been for two years at the head of a factory.

Corporations of skilled workers developed rapidly under Roman rule. Their members were exempt from military service and enjoyed many other special privileges; the highest personages of the state esteemed it an honour to be elected patrons of the great artisan corporations and made rich gifts to the body so honouring them, or left it a legacy. And the state itself took a thousand cares, some wise and some tyrannical, to keep up the personnel of the great craftsmen bodies.

For instance, many other kinds of workers besides the imperial armourers and dyers found almost insurmountable obstacles in the way of quitting their jobs. In trades like those of bakers and others essential to feeding the public, a man could not leave his trade without forfeiting to his "trade-union" all his property. (This was a state law, not the "union's" own.) Nor could he will his goods even to his own son unless the legatee took up the kind of labour the deceased had laid down.

In compensation for this, though, they had many honours and many privileges. Sometimes (not infrequently) they were ennobled. And a baker could aspire to a senatorship at Rome—and attain to it, now and then. In all civic celebrations the trade corporations

played a proud and distinguished part, foreshadowing that of the guilds in the Middle Ages.

For the first two centuries of the Roman Empire, Gaul was prosperous and, on the whole, happy; certainly it advanced tremendously in civilization. Then a number of causes began that process of disintegration by which Rome's great western empire went to pieces from inside conditions and not (save nominally) from outside pressure. I am going to enumerate some of the causes, in the next chapter—on Arras—because I feel sure they will interest many readers who have just heard the world-reverberating crash of the two empires each of which claimed to be the successor of the empire of the Cæsars. But here—not to make any one chapter too long—I will pass on to the introduction of one influence which had much to do with bringing confusion upon the Empire: Christianity.

Amiens got the new gospel first from a Spanish missionary named Firmin who came "on the sixth day of the ides of October in the year 304," and made many converts in a few days.

When news of Firmin's activities reached the ears of the imperial authorities at Amiens, they warned the people against the new religion and read them the edicts forbidding it.

But Firmin was not silenced. He betook himself to the prætorium, "and there, like St. Paul on the Areopagus, he proclaimed the living God."

This meant death, and the apostle knew it.

Valerius, the Roman governor, feared an uprising if he ordered public execution of Firmin; so he thrust him in prison and there, unostentatiously, cut off his head.

A few years later, Constantine's baptism into the

Christian faith removed all impediment to the spread of the new gospel in the Roman Empire. The timid as well as the hardy might then embrace the belief for which ten generations of martyrs had died. But many men had to *live* for the new ideals before they won the multitudes away from paganism.

One of these men came to Amiens one day in 337. He was a young legionary of Rome, seventeen years old, and his name was Martin. He had been converted to the religion of Christ when he was a little lad of ten, and he wanted to preach it. But he had, instead, to take his place in the fighting ranks of Rome. He wasn't even a recognized adherent of the faith that was in him—only a catechumen, preparing for baptism. But the teachings of his Master were not vague in his mind. He might not know how to give fluent account of them in the catechumens' class. But he knew how to exemplify them in deeds.

So, on that cold day when he went swinging, with his legion, along one of the old Roman roads into Amiens and saw by the way an aged man with no cloak, this young soldier tore his mantle in two and gave half to the shivering beggar.

That night Martin, sleeping somewhere in Amiens the deep sleep of the soldier after a march, was visited in his dream by Christ accompanied by angels. And Christ was wearing the half of Martin's cloak and saying to the angels: "This is Martin, who gave me this cloak, although he is still only a catechumen."

Amiens has always treasured this memory—holding it as a chalice holds the fragrance of a rare vintage. For many centuries a monument marked the spot where Martin met the old man—a monument which told millions of simple, struggling souls a tale they

could easily comprehend, a tale which proved to them how literally they might take the promise: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto Me."

Martin lived to become the great and venerated Bishop of Tours and, dying, became the patron saint of France. But nothing in all his career of splendid service to Christianity is so lovingly remembered as that episode at Amiens when he was "only a catechumen."

Amiens soon became an episcopal city. Its third bishop built a church over the burial place of Saint Firmin, and this was the first cathedral.

In 406 the barbarians from over the Rhine came as far as Amiens, but did not stay any length of time. The city on the Somme does not seem to have suffered much in the first waves of invasion which were so devastating to towns east of it.

Charlemagne was a friend to its prosperity, giving it not only the general benefits of his administrative system, but making special provisions for its commerce and manufactures. Among the latter were workshops where women spun linen and wool, and others where great quantities of leather were treated for military footgear and also for the "gilded shoes of the grand seigneurs."

When the great emperor was gone, though, and his empire was breaking up under his feeble heirs, the hardy Normans came down on many a raid. Indeed, it seemed to the people of Picardy that one invasion from the north was no sooner over than another had begun.

Dire things happened so ceaselessly that the sore-stricken inhabitants began to believe themselves ac-

cursed. It was whispered from one to another that the sun had risen on Amiens—once—not gold and shining, but black and opaque, "like a mass of extinguished coals"; that the moon's face was no longer that of a kindly visaged man, but portentous with crosses; and that, during a whole week, the keenest ears had heard armed battalions fighting, unseen, in the air.

The circulation of these rumours was followed—not unnaturally!—by an outbreak of pestilence; and that, in turn, by another Norman invasion.

Then came a period not less harrowing than that characterized by enemy invasions—a period of bloody feudal strife wherein one powerful noble after another contended for possession of Amiens; and whichever of them was master for the moment made Amiens feel that any other mastery might be better since none could conceivably be worse.

Under the first Capets, Amiens suffered almost continuously from feudal strife, and passed from one suzerain to another many times.

Then came a great chapter in history, of which you will be especially reminded at Amiens by the statue, back of the cathedral, in the Place St. Michel, of Peter the Hermit, preacher of the "popular" Crusade.

Peter was a native of Amiens. We don't know much about him. He may or may not have been a priest (probably was) and he must at some time have lived a hermit's life, perhaps in expiation of sin. We don't even know if he was at Clermont in Auvergne when Pope Urban II there proclaimed the First Crusade.

But he caught the crusading fever early, at any rate, and went about preaching in behalf of a sort of special crusade of the poor as distinguished from the rich nobles who were going with their glittering retinues.

Only a few of Peter's Crusaders got to the Holy Land, and they counted for very little in what was accomplished there. But while he was preaching up and down France, to raise recruits, he created a tremendous *furore*, so that even the ass on which he rode was worshipped by the hysterical peasants.

As you stand looking up at his statue and recalling the strange scenes of fanaticism and adventure of which he was the leading figure, you may feel that the time and place are as good as any for reflection on the Crusades and what they accomplished for western civilization.

Just before Peter's day the ceaseless strife between great vassals had brought the country to famine, so that even the seigneurs suffered. People devoured human flesh—the hardier survived by consuming the weaker who succumbed. And out of this came pestilence.

This condition brought the seigneurs, with their right of making war when and as they chose, to hearken to the voice of the Church and curtail their incessant strife by at least this much: they swore to keep "the truce of God," and suspend all hostilities from Thursday evening of each week to Monday morning; also, not to fight in Lent, nor in the Christmas season. And they pledged themselves to refrain at all times from attacking churches and cemeteries, and to spare the persons of unarmed clerics, and to cease the massacre of farm labourers.

Failure to keep this oath entailed a heavy fine; and failure to pay the fine was punishable by excommunication.

This truce of God was one of the things which paved the way for the Crusades. Another which served

similarly was the institution of chivalry, then coming into great vogue.

Chivalry established a close fraternity between knights, all of whom were bound in obedience to the same code of honour and duty, all of whom were sworn to protect the weak, to succour the helpless, and so on. This spirit did not, by any means, break down feudal rivalry and strife; but it put those contentions on a less ruthless if no less determined basis.

Thus the rude vassals were learning to federate, somewhat, and to submit themselves to restraint in God's name, and to pride themselves on their code of chivalry, when the call to the First Crusade shook France, in 1096.

Also, the Norman Conquest of England had fired men's imaginations with dreams of great estates wrested from the conquered of other lands and apportioned among those whose swords had helped to win them.

Pope Urban II (a Frenchman) was well aware of these favouring conditions when he announced the First Crusade. His object may have had in it some of the pure religious zeal which animated many of the Crusaders; but it certainly had in it political zeal—chiefly the desire to unite all professing Christians under the banners of the Church rather than of their respective countries, and to make the papacy supreme over every other power. Also, the menace of Islamism was alarming and must be met—if possible, it must be brought under the rule of the Pope.

In preaching the Crusade at Clermont, Pope Urban did not disdain to point out its economic utility, as well as its pious duty.

"The land you inhabit," he said, "shut in on every side by seas and mountains cramps your too-numerous

population; it is denuded of riches and scarcely furnishes nourishment to those who cultivate it. That is why you are torn and devoured by envy, why you fight among yourselves, why you massacre one another. Appease your hatreds and take the road to the Holy Sepulchre!"

This frank appeal to the spirit of foreign conquest, to the idea of room and riches won from the infidels to rob whom would be a glory, can scarcely have meant that France was actually—after so much internecine strife, so much famine and pestilence—overcrowded. What it possibly meant, and was known to mean, was that France was so completely parcelled out among a few great and lesser vassals, that the multitudes, working the land for their seigneurs on terms so severe, scarcely got subsistence from it and could hope for a better estate only by participating in a great scheme of conquest.

Such inducements were not enough, however; and the Church, to insure that the Crusade should be well manned, ruled that while on a crusade a man was beyond the reach of enemies, creditors, or even of the law. If he were a serf, he could take the cross without his seigneur's consent. And while a man was gone to the Holy Land, his family and his possessions were under the special guardianship of the Church. The excommunicated who went were thereby restored to the fold. Sinners who took the cross at once became hallowed. And so on. "It was like an exodus of all the disinherited, all the outcast of Europe, and—naturally—the most wretched and the most ignorant were the most impatient and the first to start. The Holy Land was again as in the time of Moses a Promised Land."

Those "most impatient" who were the first to go were they whom Peter the Hermit rallied by his preaching. As the overland route was followed, the expense of going was not considerable as it became later in the Crusades when the ships of Venice or Genoa were employed at great cost which only the wealthy were able to share.

Hundreds of thousands of wretched creatures followed Peter; and most of them strewed with their skeletons the deserts of Hungary and of Asia Minor, while the few who reached Syria found only barren wastes from which they were glad to return—if they could!—to France.

They themselves enjoyed few of the benefits that the Crusades brought to Europe. But even in their generation there was, as a result of that great, strange uprising and migration, an amelioration of life for all classes.

It is hard to say just what the course of civilization in Europe might have been if the Crusades had not taken place; to guess which of its developments were bound to occur and which are directly due to those wholesale irruptions of European feudalism into the totally unexpected conditions prevailing among the Arab and Byzantine peoples.

Peter's Crusaders, and the others who made the First Crusade, believed themselves to be marching against ferocious heathen living in darkness of ignorance and infidelity. Those of them who got to Syria found that the Musselman worshipped the same God as the Christians, and that either in spite of or because of the teachings of Mohammed, his followers were, on the whole, more humane than the men of the Cross, more tolerant, more charitable to the poor and tender of the sick.

They had fine arts and applied arts—had those Arabs and Byzantines—immeasurably in advance of anything Western Europe had ever imagined. They had a rich literature. In natural sciences and mathematical sciences, in medicine, the "infidels" had everything to teach and the Crusaders nearly everything to learn.

Men who went to conquer the savage and despoil him of that which he was unfit to hold, stayed to study him and returned to France to emulate him. They learned much from him in agriculture, and went home with sugar-cane and rice and cotton and buckwheat and saffron and figs and lemons and pomegranates and watermelons and apricots and artichokes and spinach and eggplant and raisins; also with a knowledge of windmills, and many invaluable new ideas about breeding domestic animals. They took home silkworms and mulberry trees and many superb dyes, and formulas for making fast colours. They learned the secrets of fine pottery and glass-making, and the tanning of superfine leathers and the tempering of superfine steel.

The Crusaders went from a land of wooden castles and wood fortifications to a land of stone ramparts and stone forts. When they returned to France they almost completely changed all their methods of warfare, offensive and defensive; they had learned about mining and sapping, about hurling balls of fire, about huge siege engines which shot enormous stones; they had learned how to make a totally different sort of armour. For the first time they had seen discipline in battle, and learned many of the methods of modern warfare.

They learned how to construct ports and to protect

them with moles and jetties and to set towers at the entrance, serving as lighthouses and also, by means of the chains between them, to close the harbour when need was. They learned how to build war vessels and equip them with ramming bows. They learned to use the compass!

Innumerable new "styles" in dress came back from the Holy Land with the first Crusaders; innumerable new tastes in food—spices and beverages.

Noble dames were taught by their returned lords to redden their hair with saffron, to use perfumes, pomades, and cosmetics brought from the Holy Land.

Petrol and naphtha came into France with returning soldiers of the cross. So did many details for the new castle-building and fortifying of towns which everywhere took place—details like crenellations and machicolations, and barbicans.

Besides all these and countless other physical changes which resulted from that vast eastward flux Peter the Hermit preached, there were unmaterial changes even greater.

One of these was, in France, the strengthening—if not, indeed, the very birth—of national pride. The prestige of France in the Orient and throughout Europe, after the first Crusades, was enormous. The French language became the universal tongue, and the language of all courts. The kings of France were revered even above the popes. Their people were enormously proud to be French. The papal idea of a supreme Christian state was overcome by the ardent new nationalism of the French. The Crusades, started by the Holy See to widen and intensify its dominance, brought the end of extreme submission to the Church, of great gifts to build and to endow abbeys and other ecclesiasti-

cal institutions. After the Crusades, men's interests were political and commercial rather than penitential.

Also, lords and commoners who had suffered together the rigours of those journeys and battles were brought together as never before in understanding and appreciation of the others' qualities. This was one cause of the new democracy that presently expressed itself. Another cause was the breaking up of many vast estates by the sale of parcels of land to defray the suzerain's expenses on Crusade. The number of landholders increased greatly. Commerce began to be a big factor and industry flourished as it had not done since the early days of the Roman Empire. A middle class developed and increased rapidly. Serfdom began to disappear. Laws began to soften. No more had the seigneur the right of life and death over his tenants, but every man was judged by a jury of his peers; and if the dispute were between a noble and a commoner, the jury was all of commoners. Laws were no longer traditions, but written decrees. And out of all this came the birth of the communes, or enfranchised cities.

It was after the First Crusade, Peter's Crusade, that the movement for charters and franchises swept the cities of northern France.

It was in 1113 that the people of Amiens demanded enfranchisement and bought a charter from King Louis VI.

The feudal lord of Amiens just then was Enguerrand of Coucy, who was no friend to such impudent innovations, and attempted to make an end of the liberties of Amiens at the point of the sword.

But the Bishop of Amiens fought for and with his people for their rights. And even the women of Amiens

battled in the front ranks against their overbearing seigneur.

They lost, however; and the King did not intervene to help them until two years later when he came with his army to besiege Amiens.

It was drawing near to Palm Sunday, 1115, when the investment of the city was completed and the assault began; and the King was wounded in the breast by one of the first shots of the defiant vassal's men.

The attack failed, and the King settled down to a siege, which lasted about two years, at the end of which time the defenders capitulated, King Louis dispossessed Enguerrand's son and heir of the countship of Amiens, restored thereto the suzerain that Enguerrand had driven out, and solemnly recognized the commune.

The charter of 1113 is not preserved. But it was "confirmed" in 1190, and we have the text of that confirmation, repeating the text of the original.

It "consecrated to the city of Amiens three sorts of rights: the right of political liberty, the right of criminal justice, and the right of civil justice."

It did not prescribe the exact magistracy whereby Amiens must rule itself but it defined the three classes of affairs over which the citizens' own judicial body should have sole jurisdiction. They were: crimes against the body politic of the commune; crimes against the person of an officer or member of the commune; and crimes and delinquencies against the property of city officials.

Citizens who were adjudged guilty of wrong against the commune were punishable by the destruction of their house and expulsion from the city.

Nothing was specified about murder. And for the rest, all the penalties mentioned in the charter were

of the sort called "amends" whereby a wrongdoer was supposed to make restitution or payment. I suppose our present system of "fines" is the direct descendant of this. In Amiens, there was a prescribed division of these "amends" or fines between the commune and the count or seigneur.

The cost and labour of keeping the city devolved upon the citizens; also its defence, the maintenance of its fortifications, and the guardianship of its civic welfare.

The city magistrates were changed each year. They were composed of a mayor and twenty-four aldermen. The retiring magistrates presented three names to the heads of the guilds or trades, from which to choose the next mayor. When that office was thus filled, the heads of the corporations chose twelve aldermen who in turn chose twelve others. (Each corporation head was named by the artisans working in that trade, and represented the interests of that body. And it is interesting to know that France is at this day considering certain legislative reforms by which officials shall be elected as representatives of a particular class of workers, rather than as representatives of so many "assorted" citizens.)

These officials then proceeded to nominate four constables charged with the financial administration and the direction of public works.

If any man called to municipal office declined to serve, he was punishable by the destruction of his house. (This harks back to the old Gallo-Roman laws about the *curiale*.)

The mayor appointed, with the assistance and consent of his twenty-four aldermen, the lesser officials, such as the guardian of the belfry, the city sealer or gauger, the master-carpenter, the court officers.

There was an "industrial police" responsible for the trades, charged with seeing that masters and workers did their duty and received their rights.

Under this system of government Amiens prospered greatly.

The citizens fortified their city and began to beautify it. Also, as their excellent administration made them a richer and richer corporation, they bought additional rights from their feudal lords.

Then, in 1185, Amiens passed directly under the control of Philippe-Auguste whose first wife (married when he was but fifteen) was Isabella of Hainault, richly dowered by her mother's brother, Philip of Alsace, Count of Flanders.

Amiens did not belong to "Uncle Philip" but to his wife Elizabeth. But when she died, he considered that it was his—as she left no heirs.

He had just (two years before) given the young Queen of France, his niece, the splendid province of Artois for a wedding present. And he was not unjustified in his surprise and resentment when her husband put in a claim for possessions which had come to "Uncle Philip" through his wife.

Queen Isabella hadn't the shadow of a claim upon the wedding portion of her uncle's wife. But Aunt Elizabeth had left a sister, Eleanore, who really had a right to be considered the heiress of Amiens and all Vermandois when her older sister died without issue. And Philippe-Auguste made with Eleanore some sort of secret arrangement whereby she ceded her claim to him. And he pushed it! He made war upon "Uncle Philip" of Flanders; and after two or three years of feuds and fighting and family wrangles, Amiens and sixty-five castles in Vermandois were added to the

possessions of the French Crown—those possessions which Philippe-Auguste continued to augment until he had made France a real kingdom and himself a real king.

Queen Isabella died in 1190—the year in which her husband set out for Palestine with Richard Cœur-de-Lion, from whom he soon parted after a quarrel—and the King remained a widower for six years.

Then he married, at Amiens, Ingelburge of Denmark, a beautiful princess for whom he conceived a tremendous distaste on the very morrow of their wedding day.

Philippe was thirty-one then. He lived to be fifty-eight, and the rest of his life, to the door of the tomb, was shadowed by his efforts to undo that marriage.

Ingelburge, heartbroken and terribly humiliated, wrote many plaintive letters, from her retreat, to the canons of the cathedral at Amiens, entreating their prayers for her that the King might take her back into favour. She sent gifts with these letters, and promised far richer ones if through the prayers of the canons "Heaven would restore to her the love of the King."

Heaven never restored it. Doubtless Heaven can restore a dead love; but I have never heard of Heaven doing it.

Political and pontifical pressure obliged Philippe to make a show of accepting Ingelburge—after a long time—but it was a show only.

He loved another, married her in defiance of the Pope, had two children by her, and was forced to put her away on Ingelburge's claim. And thereafter he hated Ingelburge more violently than ever.

Her pleading letters to the canons were preserved at Amiens cathedral, and probably were taken away before the late bombardment began.

The cathedral of Amiens, one of the most beautiful edifices on the world, was begun in 1220, on the site of the earlier cathedral destroyed by fire in 1218. "The people," says an old chronicle, "after having furnished the funds, lent also their aid; they worked day and night, in shifts; and during the night, in the candlelight, they who were not toiling sang hymns. Thus was the ceaseless labour glorified."

The cathedral was sixty-eight years in building. It was, in a sense, built to house a very precious relic believed to be the head of John the Baptist, which a Crusader knight brought back with him from Constantinople early in the thirteenth century. This relic brought many pilgrims to Amiens, and the cathedral was enriched by their gifts of gratitude or expiation or placation.

The year after the completion of the cathedral, it was the scene of a notable ceremony, at which St. Louis (Louis IX) officiated as arbitrator in the quarrel between King Henry III of England and his barons.

The long wrangle between the French and English kings, because the latter, holding many fiefs in France, were therewith subject to the Crown of France, came to a dramatic climax once in Amiens cathedral. There, on June 6, 1329, Edward III, of England, belted and crowned, knelt as vassal at the feet of Philip of Valois, whose title to the French throne Edward contested.

"Sire," said the grand chamberlain to Edward, "you owe, as Duke of Guienne, homage to the King, and pledge of loyalty."

Edward replied that he would render simple homage, but did not wish to commit himself further.

He was told that his ancestors had sworn complete allegiance.

"Indeed!" was his comment—and he rose from his knees swearing within himself that this state of affairs should end.

The Hundred Years' War was the result. Seventeen years later Philip was defeated by Edward at Crécy, thirty-five miles away, and retired to Amiens, which was thereupon more strongly walled and fortified to keep it from falling to the English—who lately defended it for France!

Twice in the mid-years of the fourteenth century, the citizens of Amiens revolted against their King, John—or, rather, against his son Charles who was acting as regent during his father's captivity in England. They had suffered many things under King John, and they sought relief from their distress by joining a plot to put Charles the Bad of Navarre on the throne of France.

For the first of these uprisings, Charles the Regent graciously pardoned them. He knew what cause they had. And perhaps he earned his sobriquet of "the Wise" by not expecting people to remain loyal to a ruler who showed no regard for their interests.

But when some citizens were so inappreciative of his clemency as to take part in a second effort to bring down his dynasty, he caused seventeen heads to fall beneath the headsman's stroke, on a scaffold set up in the grand market-place.

And after that Amiens went about its business for a few years undistracted by any dreams of king-making.

Charles the Regent became Charles the King, and reigned for sixteen years. Then came his poor weak son, Charles VI, who sat, a madman, on the throne of France for forty-two dreadful years.

His accession was marked by popular uprisings

against new taxes; and some of the people of Amiens, notably the artisans, took part in this rebellion.

Charles had not the wisdom to inquire what justice the malcontents had on their side. The thing that chiefly impressed him was that there could be artisans who dared to defy their king. And in consequence of getting this idea into his exceedingly weak mind, he began to concern himself with curtailing the powers of the commune.

When the quarrel between France and Burgundy waxed bitter, Amiens showed that it, too, could be magnanimous as well as loyal; for, in spite of the diminution of its liberties under Charles VI, and the material advantages it might have expected under the rule of the lavish and splendid Burgundians, it rendered absolute obedience to the King when he (or someone in his name) forbade Amiens to let the Duke of Burgundy, murderer of the King's brother, pass through there en route to Paris.

In 1435, when Burgundy, weary of the war and mindful what were the advantages of the time for driving a good bargain with France, transferred her alliance from England to her own rightful sovereign, her price for doing her simple duty was a tremendous one, which included "the towns of the Somme" of which Amiens is the chief.

The King of France, however, reserved the right to buy back those towns for four hundred thousand crowns —if ever he should have so much money.

He did not avail himself of this right; but his son, Louis XI, did, in 1463—only to have Burgundy recapture those Somme towns soon afterward. In 1470 Louis retook them. And when Burgundy essayed to get them back again, he failed not alone through

Louis's efforts to defend them but (in the case of Amiens at least) because the townsfolk were so determined to belong to the Crown of France.

Louis knew how to ingratiate himself with them.

"Remember," said he to the citizens, "the fervent declaration of Charles the Wise who said that with the loyalty of Picardy, the finances of Normandy, and the good counsel of Paris, he need never fear the most powerful of enemies."

When Francis I engaged in his wars with Emperor Charles V to regain possession of those French territories which had passed under the rule of Spain, Amiens aided her King not in ordinary ways alone but in ways extraordinary—such as rendering up to him her gold chalices and her beloved bronze bells.

The Roman Catholic League, opposed to the accession of Henry of Navarre, was strong enough at Amiens to cause that city to resist the new King. But it soon capitulated. And Henry was another monarch wise enough to appreciate the value of overlooking a great deal. He promised to forget the brief "misunderstanding" and to do all he could to maintain the ancient privileges of Amiens. And he kept his word.

The next year Spain was again at war with France, and succeeded in taking the town of Doullens, twenty miles north of Amiens, where—after a frightful massacre of inhabitants wiping out more lives, Sully said, than were lost in the three great battles of Coutras, Arques, and Ivry—the Spanish installed as governor one Herman Tello Porto Carrero who sought to distinguish himself by the taking of Amiens.

Tello was informed by a citizen of Amiens who was a member of the League, that the city was poorly defended. So he resolved upon an attack.

He left Doullens in the night of March 11–12, 1595, at the head of five hundred foot soldiers, seven hundred horses, and some carts; and at daybreak was in sight of Amiens.

Halting his little army in a culvert, he sent forward forty soldiers disguised as peasants driving heavily laden farm-carts.

With evident greed to get first to the city with their produce, these forty charioteers got themselves jammed in a *mêlée* which blocked the north gate of Amiens—just beneath the lifted portcullis.

At the moment when the guard should have been scolding them for their unmannerliness, one of them "clumsily" spilled a sack of walnuts.

The guard scrambled for the nuts, and the "peasants" fell upon them, hacked them to pieces, and opened the north gate of the city to Tello and the rest of his band.

The people of Amiens were disarmed, and had to yield to Spanish rule.

When Henry IV heard this he called Sully (his favourite minister) to him, and wringing his hands he cried: "Amiens is taken!"

He was "profoundly afflicted." But Sully, more calm, began at once to plan retaking the Picardy capital.

An army was soon sent north to besiege Amiens. All the nobility of France joined it. A resolution was offered and adopted in the French *parlement* branding with infamy all gentlemen who did not betake themselves to the rescue of Amiens.

Henry arrived on the scene June 7th. On the 25th the batteries of the King opened fire.

A French captain who shared the mislike of gunfire

on their beautiful city attempted to retake it by strategy. Disguised as a monk, he managed to get into the town. There he found some loyal citizens who were willing to aid him in opening the gates to the French army.

But their plan was discovered and thwarted, and they were hung.

Thereupon, forty-five large cannon were trained upon the walls, and the siege became a battle.

Tello was killed on September 4th. His successor soon surrendered to the King of France. And the first article in the terms of capitulation was that the tomb of Tello with its epitaph and the trophies adorning it should rest undisturbed—provided that nothing was found there contrary to the honour of France.

Henry showed himself magnanimous to the Spanish garrison, but severe toward the citizens who had sided with them. The confiscated goods of the latter he bestowed upon his soldiers wounded during the siege and subsequent battle. And upon the clergy who had prayed for the success of Spain, he laid a heavy tax.

Thereafter, so long as Henry lived, Amiens enjoyed peace and great prosperity.

Its next disorders were occasioned by its antagonism to the Italian governor foisted upon it by Henry's widow, Marie de' Medici.

In 1625 Henry's youngest daughter, Henrietta Maria, stopped for some time in Amiens on her way to England as the bride of Charles I. Her brother, the King, was ill in Paris and unable to accompany her; and her mother had stayed behind at Compiègne afflicted with an illness which delayed the bride's departure. But with her was her beautiful young

sister-in-law, Anne of Austria, Louis XIII's Spanish queen, with whom King Charles's envoy and intimate, the Duke of Buckingham, presumed to be madly in love.

The queen and the princess and their suite were lodged in the bishop's palace. Buckingham and his suite were lodged close by.

Many brilliant fêtes were given and Buckingham was often in the company of the queen.

One evening as she was walking in the bishop's gardens, followed at some distance by two dames of honour, Buckingham suddenly stepped from behind a great tree-trunk and threw himself imploringly at her feet. She cried out, and her dames ran toward her. When they were near enough to realize the situation, they halted discreetly. But the queen called them to her.

That night Buckingham, rebuffed and made ridiculous, took himself off to England.

At length the queen-mother arrived and took her farewells of Henrietta Maria. When they parted, she put into the hands of the beautiful fifteen-year-old girl, going to fill a so-difficult position as queen of a country arrayed against her on account of her religion, a letter of counsel which did much to set Henrietta Maria inflexibly against any of those concessions that might have kept England out of civil war and Charles's handsome head upon his shoulders.

In the years that followed, Amiens suffered much. The conflict between France and Spain raged all around her and she was taxed to the uttermost limits, to pay for this warfare. In 1667 twenty thousand of her citizens were carried off by a plague. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, was an all but

fatal blow to the industrial prosperity of Amiens, scattering thousands of her best citizens to far corners of the earth where they might have freedom to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

During the reign of Louis XV, Amiens had no outstanding event which specially characterized her share in the misery of France at that epoch. She endured, and laboured, and held to her ancient ways as much as the swirling rapids of new thought in France would permit.

I do not find one of the *Ardentes* of those days associated with Amiens—except Madame Roland, who lived there from 1781 to 1785, soon after her marriage. Her husband was Inspector-General of Commerce in Picardy. At Amiens their only child, Eudora, was born. From there, in 1781, Madame Roland wrote to her husband absent on a business trip: "M. de Vin came to see me yesterday to tell me of our victory in America over Cornwallis."

"Our" victory! In a double sense it was France's victory; but before that had come to France of which Manon Roland dreamed, her head was to fall beneath the Paris guillotine set up close to that figure of Liberty she apostrophized in her last breath: "O Liberty, Liberty! How many crimes are committed in thy name."

In her years at Amiens, however, Manon Roland was far from foreshadowing that day. She seems, while there, to have yielded herself completely to the placid, industrious life of the Picards who have always inclined to moderation.

For ages they have exhibited the same general characteristics: great practical sense and not much imagination. They have ever been slow to decide, but obstinate

in their resolutions, once their minds are made up; hard-working, profoundly attached to their native soil, satisfied with modest fortune; orderly, economical; a singular mixture of slowness and brusqueness, of inaction and uprightness, of indifference and strong fidelity. The old ideas and old manners survive tenaciously; they have deep roots, in Picardy, where even the speech of the people conserves many characteristics of that spoken in those parts six centuries ago.

It was inevitable that Amiens should be enthusiastic about the democratic form of government, demand for which was then sweeping over France; the old, old spirit of her commune leaped in response to that. But also it was inevitable that she should be horrified by the excesses of the Revolution, and by the death of her King, Louis XVI.

As answer to the charge of lukewarmness, she sent eight hundred men of her National Guard quota to the relief of Lille when that city was making her heroic resistance against the Austrians.

But she reproached her deputies to the National Assembly for consenting to the death of Louis XVI; she demanded the abolition of the Revolutionary Tribunal with its wholesale condemnations to slaughter; and she called for the dethronement of Robespierre, Danton, and Marat.

The penalty for this was swift and savage. On the pretext that the local government was opposed to liberty, it was abolished; and the Terrorists sent up from Paris two deputy governors charged with forcing the worst excesses of *sans-culottisme* upon the moderation-loving Picards.

Amiens drove out one of these tormentors, at the

bayonet's point. The other conformed to the Picard standard sufficiently to get on fairly well there.

The consulate and Empire brought a few events of national importance to Amiens.

On the 27th of March, 1802, plenipotentiaries of France, England, Spain, and Holland, met in the old Picardian capital and signed the Peace of Amiens.

Joseph Bonaparte represented France; Lord Cornwallis, England; the Chevalier d'Azara, Spain; and Mynheer Schimmel Penninck, Holland.

That treaty was signed in one of the great salons of the Hôtel de Ville; and when it was drawn up, ready for signing, the doors of that apartment were thrown open to the public of whom as many as could gain admittance were privileged to see the plenipotentiaries affix their names and the seals of their governments, then embrace each other fervently. All this was accomplished amid a thousand cheers of "Long live Bonaparte! Long abide peace!"

But peace did *not* bide long. The cheers had scarcely died away when boats for the invasion of England began building on the Somme; and soon Bonaparte, first consul of France, for whom that treaty signed at Amiens had done so much to advance his prestige, was in the Picardy capital furthering his flotilla plans.

While he was there, the mayor presented him with some swans—a ceremonial which, in the Middle Ages, had been reserved exclusively to the solemn entry of kings. Afterwards, when Napoleon wore the imperial diadem, there were many in Amiens whose pleasure it was to recall that there, first, had sovereign honour been shown him.

But Amiens could not remain enthusiastic about the Emperor; he was too greatly addicted to war.

When Napoleon was banished to Elba, and Louis XVIII came to Amiens on his way from exile to Paris, Amiens hailed the Bourbon, hoping he would restore peace.

But when the Bourbons fell, Amiens shed no more tears than any other part of France.

In 1870, in a battle which raged in many places about the city, Amiens fell to the Germans and was occupied by them until the war's close.

In August, 1914, the Uhlans entered Amiens, demanded and received a huge indemnity, and hurried on toward Paris.

Thereafter, Amiens saw nothing of the enemy for more than three and a half years, during which time the city served as a British base.

Then came the drive beginning March 21, 1918, and in six weeks nearly six thousand large calibre shells and more than six hundred aerial bombs fell on the city, whole quarters of which were razed, damage was done to the cathedral and other historic buildings, and fewer than one thousand of the normal ninety thousand inhabitants of Amiens were left amid the desolation.

III

ARRAS

THE first definite mention, in literature that survives to our day, of a town named Arras, is in the writings of St. Jerome who not only speaks of Arras as one of the principal Gallic cities devastated by the barbarians, but indicates that even then— in the fourth century—the name of Arras was widely known for its rich fabrics. "You not only wear clothing of linen and silk," he says reproachfully, "but you wish to cover your body with the stuffs of Arras."

"It is then," one historian concludes, "permissible to assume that the town, built after the conquests of Julius Cæsar, was not long in becoming the centre of a great industry from which she long derived the greatest fame and the most substantial advantages."

The tapestries of Arras were eagerly sought at Rome even before the founding of Constantinople. But what importance besides her industrial eminence Arras may have had in the Gallo-Roman Empire, we do not know.

Her corporations of wool-spinners and weavers must have been very rich and powerful. And Rome probably, in spite of her pride in them and her honours to their officers, alienated their loyalty by her tyrannies —just as she did everywhere, with her every class of

subjects, in the years when she was trying to keep up the magnificence and power of her empire by a policy of coercion which had none of the strength of conquest and all the weakness of bullying.

In the chapter on Amiens we recalled how she bound the *colons* to the soil, to guarantee agriculture, permitting the men of that class no other occupation save that of fighting (when she called them) in her legions; and how she branded the imperial armourers; and how she made it impossible for a skilled worker in any trade to change his mode of earning a living, or to will his goods to one who would not follow in his footsteps.

She went further even than this. The office of local senator, which was at first elective and much sought, became obligatory and despised. There ceased (in the third century of our era) to be elections, and the office of local senator, or *curiale*, was imposed upon every citizen who owned twenty-two and one half acres of land, or more.

These officials were exempt from torture, no matter what they did, and after a certain number of years of service as *curiales* they were eligible to become petty nobles, or counts of the third class. But against these dubious privileges there were set some very onerous responsibilities—such as making up the exact total of the imperial taxes imposed on their city; and if the poor were unable to pay, the senators had to meet the deficit out of their own pockets, though it took their last penny.

This office could not be evaded, slighted, nor laid down. A *curiale* could not sell any of his property to evade the income tax. He couldn't give it away except to someone who would take his place in the senate and continue to pay Rome the tithes on that property.

If he died without an heir who could become a senator, part of his property was appropriated by the state. If he tried to run away, all his property was forfeited. He couldn't be a soldier, nor a monk, nor a priest, without forfeiture of all he owned. He couldn't move to the country, nor travel, without permission.

He became a tax collector, pure and simple, and was chained to the task like a slave in the galleys.

Rome's policy was "all for the Empire." But she made the Empire a more and more expensive luxury—in money and in curtailed liberties—and omitted to increase its benefits proportionately.

We have all been made keenly aware of taxes as a burden, since the late war began. We know now, as few in our generation knew before, what it is to support a government policy which demands a large part of the fruits of our toil. So we may be interested in a degree that once upon a time we should not have been, in the taxes people paid in a city like Arras about the time St. Jerome wrote that letter mentioning its "stuffs."

There was direct and indirect taxation, much as we now have. The former was of six classes. A man in Arras—a skilled wool-weaver, let us say—had to pay an income tax; he had to pay a tax for the upkeep of ports; he had to pay a share of the maintenance of the Roman governor of the province; he had to meet requisitions of supplies for the army; he had to pay special assessments of all sorts, for road-building, for army transportation, for the entertainment of Roman officials on tour, etc.; and he had to pay an industrial tax. Indirectly he contributed to Rome's treasury by paying import dues chargeable not only on entry into the country but again on entry into the city; he paid toll to use the roads, and toll to cross the bridges for

whose building he had already paid assessment; if he sold a slave, he paid Rome four per cent. of what he got for him; if he inherited money, five per cent. was deducted for inheritance tax; if he bought or sold at auction, he was taxed one per cent. of the amount involved; and so on.

When a new emperor ascended the Cæsar's throne, the senate of Arras, as of every municipality, was required to make a gift of gold to him.

Torture was commonly resorted to, to make citizens yield up what they had been hiding for sustenance; and misery was so widespread and so acute that Diocletian found it necessary to issue an edict forbidding parents to sell their children, and Constantine deemed it humane to recall that edict and permit such sales—so many parents there were who, after they had satisfied the demands of Rome, had nothing left wherewith to keep their children from starvation.

These were substantially the conditions at Arras and throughout Gaul when a Greek priest named Diogenes came there preaching the new religion. He was martyred, not by Rome, which had ceased persecution, but by the Vandals, during an invasion; but not before he had given Arras not only Christianity in general, but a special cult which endured through many centuries.

Wool was a great factor in life, at Arras; plenty of wool meant plenty of industry; scarcity of wool doubtless meant scarcity of bread. So Diogenes, to stimulate the interest and faith of his hearers at Arras, seems to have concluded that a God who could augment the natural supply of wool by raining down some more from heaven would be very popular at Arras.

Now, far be it from me to guess what happened.

But St. Jerome, in another of his letters, says there was a "sort of rain of wool" on the ground near Arras, about the year 370; and that Diogenes "hastened to gather up a bushel of that heavenly manna."

I don't know who else benefited by that strange snowy fall—or whether Diogenes was the only one up and about in time to see it, and everybody had to believe his account of it when they beheld his bushel. But Arras was as impressed with the wool as even he could have wished it to be, and continued to venerate it for fifteen centuries. The annals of Arras aver that though two churches containing the holy wool were consumed by fire, the miraculous wool was not scorched. In the thirteenth century the reliquary containing it was broken as it was being carried in a procession; and the bishop, gathering up the wool and the fragments of its container, put them in an exquisitely wrought little chest of silver-gilt, together with the white veil of the Holy Virgin and the girdle she wore when visited by the Annunciation Angel. The fête of these three relics was on the first Sunday after Easter. It was continued, through all vicissitudes, down to modern times and had not, so far as I know, been discontinued when the late war began.

Arras suffered nothing from Rome on account of Christianity, because the new religion was not preached there until after it had become the official religion of the emperors. But it doubtless bore its full share of the other causes which brought down the great western empire; and it suffered dire things in the barbarian invasions.

Attila completely destroyed Arras in 451; but a pious bishop named Vaast, companion of Remi, obtained from the Hun permission to found, on the still-

smoking ruins, an oratory—which was all that there was on the site of the once-prosperous city for more than a hundred years, when royal favour converted the humble place of prayer into an abbey, protected by thick walls and a fortress; and more royal favour made it a present which set the abbey in the way of great celebrity and wealth. This was the gift of a skull supposed to be that of Saint James the Less, which was brought back from Spain by one of Clovis's sons and successors.

Around that skull a powerful and splendid city grew, as many another city waxed rich and potent through the possession of sacred relics.

So necessary to any understanding of our civilization is it to comprehend something of the monasteries and religious orders and their civil powers in the Dark and Middle Ages, that I am going to take space here for a brief consideration of Arras as an abbey town—just as I shall take space in the story of Laon to write of it as a typical cathedral town, and in the story of Metz to describe it as the capital of a bishopric.

The humble little oratory of St. Vaast was probably just a rude wooden shelter for the sacred wool, with an altar where an occasional priest in transit might say Mass for the few Christians scattered about in the devastated country after Attila's day.

But the baptism of Clovis put a different aspect on things Christian in Frankish Gaul. This was not because Clovis became so tremendously devout, but because he used the Church to further his own ends, and in order to array the Church strongly, with all its powers of excommunication and terrorization, on his side, he gave it many inducements to be loyal to him: lands and powers and exemptions and what-not.

Just why his son should have bestowed St. James's skull upon the humble little oratory of St. Vaast amid the ruins Attila had made, instead of giving it to much more renowned establishments of the Church in his kingdom, I have never "heard tell." But immediately its presence there became known, great tides of pilgrims set in, to pray beside the relic; some wanted Heaven's forgiveness for what they had done; some wanted Heaven's aid or Heaven's leniency for things they were about to do; some wanted cure for ills; some wanted one thing and some wanted another, but they all paid; some gave great gifts and some gave small, but they all gave. Soon, St. Vaast's Abbey became very rich. Lands were bequeathed to it; tithes were paid in to it; goods were handed over to it, in fear or for favour.

Legends circulated. in those days, about the warnings which had come to this "malefactor of great wealth" and that one, in dreams—as a result of which they had placated Heaven and averted their doom by yielding up to some church or abbey under the patronage of the "appearing" saint, large holdings of ill-gotten gains. Smaller "fry" also had accusing consciences, and prevailing dreams.

An abbey domain like that of St. Vaast was a quite complete little world in itself, walled and defence-towered like a city, guarded by the abbot's own company of fighting men who became warriors on the call of the abbot's overlord, led sometimes by the abbot himself and again (as various times brought various customs) by a lieutenant of his, one who was not in holy orders.

Within the abbey walls were buildings of many sorts and uses, from the wine-presses, cellars, kitchens, store-

houses, stables, wash-houses, etc., to the monks' dormitories, the library, the cells in which the copyists everlastingly bent over their parchments, the chemist's "shop," the hostels for lodging pilgrims and travellers, the abbot's house, and so on—culminating in the abbey church, which was all that the pride and wealth of the abbey could make it.

Gardens there were, too,—vegetable and herb gardens for the most part—and a fish pond stocked with food for the many "meatless days"; and cloisters wherein the segregated members of the order walked apart from the community of lay brothers, pilgrims, travellers, and other sorts.

In time, a secular community grew up close to the abbey, and when it assumed considerable proportions it was walled. So there were two walled enclosures separated by a moat and a drawbridge with a fort at either end of it; and both enclosures were under ecclesiastical rule—the St. Vaast domain, which sheltered a good many forms of life other than those of a monastery, was called the *ville*, and was ruled by the abbot or abbé; the newer community was called the city or *cité*, and was ruled by the bishop.

The *cité* waxed rich through its industries, and the *ville* waxed rich through St. James's skull.

Then, on a dreadful day, the founder of a rival abbey —at Berclau—managed to steal the skull for his own institution.

For a hundred and forty years the new abbey prospered through the gifts of pilgrims, and St. Vaast's was terribly neglected. At length its monks determined to get back their treasure at any cost; and the Bishop, though his differences with them were per-

petual, joined forces with them to recover the sacred and wealth-producing relic.

"On a beautiful morning," says an Arras annalist of long ago, "there was seen winding out of Arras Bishop André with his clergy and Abbé Martin with his monks; they went to Berclau, looked everywhere, even broke into the high altar, but were obliged to return empty-handed. A second expedition was more successful—the skull was seized from the hands of a monk who was making off with it on his own account —and the victors were about to start back to Arras with their treasure, when the people of the countryside about the abbey of Berclau rallied to the defence of that which brought them so much trade and honour, and threatened to kill the first monk who made a step Arras-ward before the relic was restored."

The clergy from Arras would have had to go home empty-handed a second time, but for the arrival of an officer of the Count of Flanders who lent the aid of his armed force to the invaders.

So they got the skull back to Arras, and the Bishop bestowed it safely in the church of St. Michael—in the *cité.*

"But it belongs to St. Vaast—to the abbey in the *ville!*" protested the abbé.

In the midst of their wrangling, Count Philip of Flanders arrived.

"The skull was found on my lands," said he, "and it belongs to me."

In vain the abbé pleaded for it—argued, entreated; then, when he saw he was making no impression on the Count, he appealed to his monks. They forced their way into St. Michael's church, snatched the relic, and were making off with it to St. Vaast when the armed

forces of the Count overtook them, made them give back the saint's head, and whisked it away to Aire—thirty-odd miles north-west of Arras—where a new church was about to be consecrated in the name of St. Peter. In all haste went the Abbé Martin after it, arriving at the culminating moment of the dedicatory service and forbidding the Bishop of Thérouanne to go on with the consecration.

But Count Philip was present; and he swore that if the dedication did not proceed, he would carry the head of St. James so far away that it would never again be heard of in those parts. "As he was known to be a man who kept his word, the abbé desisted in his protest, and the church of St. Peter at Aire was dedicated."

But the matter was not settled. Far from it! It was only on the way to break up all Christendom into opposing camps.

Abbé Martin carried his complaint to the Pope. The Count of Flanders tried to buy the incensed prelate's compliance—but in vain. And for six years the King of France and the Archbishop of Reims endeavoured by prayers and threats to make Count Philip restore what he had high-handedly stolen.

At last, both parties to the quarrel consented to a compromise. On the high altar of St. Peter's at Aire, the skull was cut in two equal parts; the Count chose the front half and left the back half to the abbé, who was obliged to content himself therewith.

Philip consigned his part to a magnificent reliquary, the keys of which he wore on his breast.

"Such tales," comments M. Paulin Paris, "paint for us a better picture of the manners and customs of the twelfth century than could be conveyed in heaped-up descriptions of defeats and victories."

That Count Philip was a gallant figure of a sort much approved in his day. He went three times to Palestine, and there formed an alliance with the young King of France, Philippe-Auguste, to whom he succeeded in marrying his niece, Isabella of Hainault, dowering her with all the county of Artois.

Thus passed to the French crown Arras, Bapaume, Hesdin, St. Omer, Lens, Aire, and other rich possessions. And one of the first concerns of the French King was to confirm and extend the franchises of the city of Arras. I would like to give a detailed outline of that charter of municipal rights which Philippe-Auguste granted Arras in the latter years of the twelfth century and which was preserved in the ancient city until the Germans destroyed it by fire in the late war. But there is so much to say of Arras that I must not pause for this—only quote what Madame de Staël said in comment on such documents: "It is not servitude but rather liberty that is old in our annals."

Under the charter Arras became a great city of eighty thousand inhabitants, many of them rich and most of them prosperous and proud. Her tapestries, her cloth of wool and of gold, her silks, were renowned even beyond the bounds of Christendom. In 1396 the eldest son of the then Count of Flanders and Artois (Artois having again become a feudal holding) was taken prisoner by the Saracens in Palestine. And when the young man's father sent the Sultan Bajazet a magnificent tapestry of Arras representing the battles of Alexander the Great, it was accepted as full ransom and the prince was set free. At last accounts the tapestry was still ornamenting the Sultan's seraglio.

Arras was then the Athens of the North, cultured as well as rich, holding letters and the arts in high

honour. She had her Court of Love, her poets and minstrels, her succession of gorgeous fêtes at which nobles and rich bourgeois vied in splendour and in patronage of the arts and art crafts. We are told that the prizes awarded to poets, balladists, romancers at Arras in those days were more ardently sought than the laurels of the Academy today. Likewise celebrated were the tournaments of Arras to which came all the ambitious young knights of Artois, Picardy, and Champagne.

In those days (about the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth century) the town was visited by a frightful pestilence called *le mal des ardents*.

One day during the plague, two jugglers—one from Brabant and one a native of Artois—were directed by the Virgin, appearing to each in a vision, to betake themselves on the morrow to the church in Arras, there to become reconciled and abandon the quarrel that had been between them; and, after this was done, to tell the bishop that they would bring him, that night, an infallible remedy for the fever.

The jugglers obeyed, and presented themselves at the church. Greatly must their faith have been strengthened when they began to "compare notes"!

And the Virgin, true to her promise, put into their hands a candle with instructions that a few drops of its melted wax dropped into a jar of water would cure the plague-stricken. (Whether they were to drink the water or wash in it, or merely to look at it, the ancient annalists do not say.)

When the jugglers carried the candle to the bishop he was surrounded by more than a hundred and fifty stricken folk expecting death. All recovered, thanks to the candle, except one—who scoffed, and died.

After the pestilence had disappeared, the candle—undiminished in all its burning—was venerated in Arras. Saint Bernard came thither to pray before it. It was elegantly housed in a pyramid built for it in the year 1200 on the Little Market Place, and later in a splendid chapel in which, for six hundred years, the "very holy candle" was worshipped. Each year, beginning on Wednesday evening of *La Fête-Dieu* (Corpus Christi), the Society of Ardents, under the auspices of the jugglers and minstrels of Arras, held a four-day celebration in honour of the candle. Each day the candle was lighted, and burned during a mass. Each night it was reverently replaced in its container. On the fourth day it was carried, in a splendid procession characterized by all the pomp that Flanders so dearly loved, to the cathedral, where the candle was again lighted. When the flame burned in the shape of a cross, it was considered an augury of an abundant harvest.

It is exceedingly interesting to read the comments of lay historians on the Holy Candle. One of them, Hennebert, even figured that the minimum amount of time the candle had been lighted in 680 years was a total of fifty-seven days; that a candle of such girth as that would burn away an inch per hour; that in fifty-seven days it would decrease by 1360 inches; and that it is impossible to suppose that the original candle was 113 feet tall!

Ergo, it must have been a miraculous candle which did not diminish with burning.

I take it for granted, in retelling these old tales simply as I find them, that the attitude of most readers toward them is much like my own. And to me it matters not the tiniest whit whether the candle were miraculous

or shrewdly and secretly renewed. What matters is that for nearly seven centuries it burned, annually, before the eyes of kneeling multitudes at Arras, reminding them that once upon a time two humble jugglers were made instruments of great beneficence when they had forgotten their jealousies and listened to divine counsel. Thus did the jugglers and their penitence and faith become a part of the richly colourful life that was lived at Arras. And because it was a part of that life it is significant to you and me.

In the fifteenth century the townsfolk of Arras, wishing to express to posterity their joy in their beautiful city and the privileges it afforded them, decided to erect a superb belfry which should stand through ages to come as a symbol of their power and their franchises and their grateful pride in Arras.

Through nearly a century of changing national policies and unchanging civic devotion, the labour of love went on, completing a structure which one of its mourners has described as a "flight of flowering stones."

Two hundred and forty-five feet it soared, "with the grace of a flame and like a cry of joy and liberty in the sky." (I quote not from a poem, but from a report of a commissioner of public works!)

From its delicately lanced galleries a magnificent peal of bells rang out their frequent calls to Arras to lift its thought skyward or to heed some reminder that was for its good. There was the great bell "*Joyeuse*" which weighed nearly nine tons and whose deep booming set every heart in Arras leaping on many an occasion of big import. And there was the bell "*Guet*," or "Sentinel," whose duty 'twas to mark the passing of time and strike the hours. And the bell whose tone,

heard alone, meant to every ear in Arras "Fire!" And the curfew bell.

We don't know much about chimes and carillons in America. But in Arras—as in many another beautiful old world city—much of the poetry of life was associated with the belfry and its bells. The soul of the city spoke—or sang—thus to the city's children.

The silencing of those bells brought a more awful desolation than the silencing of mothers' voices, for we always know (even when we are tiny children) that mothers are like flowers—they fade away from us sooner or later. But those bells, in Arras, were of the past and of the future; one thought of them as of all time—and then, suddenly, they were not!

The Hôtel de Ville of Arras was an exceedingly rich structure, rivalling in delicate grace and in plenitude of ornamental detail many of the handsomest and most renowned Hotels de Ville of Belgium. Like the belfry it was justly called "a poem in stone."

Nearby the Hotel de Ville and the belfry, and serving them as a frame and an enhancement (as one writer puts it), the Petite Place and the Grande Place offered a vista unique in France. . . . The stranger who visited Arras for the first time was struck with astonishment and admiration as he contemplated those vast squares which for the citizens of Arras evoked nearly all the history of their city. It was on those squares, in the course of the ages, that the soul of Arras had often voiced itself.

It was in the Petite Place, above all, that the crowds had gathered to express themselves in times of great emotional stress and revolutions; it was there, in the times of the city's greatest grandeur, that tournaments and carrousels took place, and the popular joy manifested itself in fêtes

and chattering kirmesses. It was there that the commercial life of the city had centred for centuries.

In the time of Louis XI the hostelries which surrounded the two squares had accommodations for as many as three thousand travellers with tneir horses.

Many of the old inn-signs still swung in the winds, when the barbarians came; many of the picturesque old mansions about the squares were the very ones from which, "lang syne," the noble seigneurs and gentle dames of other days had come forth with their imposing escorts of lackeys and squires.

Then there was the Palace of Saint-Vaast, formerly the abbey, as rebuilt two centuries ago—an immense structure and one of the most important specimens of eighteenth century monastic architecture remaining to us after the destructive fury of the French Revolution.

The length of this noble building was more than 700 feet, and its depth 260 feet. Many capitals had envied Arras that magnificent palace, than which it was really impossible to imagine anything more severe, more grandiose, more monumental.

In that immense building were housed the archives of Arras and of all Artois for ten centuries; the Arras library, exceptionally rich in ancient manuscripts; the art and archæological collections (the latter displayed in the beautiful old cloisters); the natural history collection, and an industrial museum.

It is not possible to enumerate here all the public buildings which were the justifiable pride of Arras, nor to say much of her churches, of which none were of great antiquity, though nearly all conserved traditions very old and very dear.

She was one of those old, old cities which have their

peculiar beauty of aspect and their indescribable quality of poetic enchantment.

She was still proud of her memorials of the past, of her slender graceful belfry rising straight toward heaven; of her richly ornate Hôtel de Ville; of her Grande Place and her Petite Place with their Flemish architecture; of her churches; of her narrow, sinuous streets that were so picturesque, and of her venerable houses so eloquent of the past.

The old ramparts were replaced by handsome modern boulevards and new streets had been laid out in the faubourgs that were once beyond the city walls. There were two cities, really—the old and the new—but the modern town proudly acknowledged itself the vassal of ancient Arras.

Thus she was, a powerful, prosperous French city of twenty-five thousand souls, when, on an August afternoon, in 1914, in the midst of breathless silence, the order for mobilization was posted on her public walls, and almost immediately her men began hurrying away to meet the invader.

By the 21st, dark rumours of defeat in the north began to circulate in Arras. (I was there on the 20th and the very air was heavy with apprehension. We knew grave things were happening, but we did not know what they were, nor where. It was that day Brussels was occupied.)

"The 25th it was like a panic in the city. Many inhabitants of Orchies arrived, fleeing before the Germans, who had occupied without resistance—they said—Lille, Valenciennes, and Douai.[1]

[1] I quote from *Arras Sous les Obus* by M. l'Abbé E. Foulon, professor in the Institute St. Joseph at Arras.

The news seemed so incredible to many that they actually mocked the poor fugitives who brought it.

However, the morning papers did not arrive, and when the evening news came it was to the effect that the battle in Belgium had not yielded the hoped-for results.

Pessimistic rumours continued to circulate the next day, and people in flight from near-by villages reported that they had heard the roar of cannon and their mayors had advised them to flee.

Toward evening, everything was acknowledged to be bad for us. The various administrative bodies hastily left the city, and many families followed their example.

The 27th, the panic increased. Guns roared continually in the direction of Bapaume. The first flocks of wounded poured into the Hospital Saint-Jean.

In the night of the 28th, the French military authorities blew up the pont d'Athies, over the Scarpe, the electric plant of Arras, and the round-houses of the railway.

Arras was cut off from the rest of France. No more post, no more telegraph, no more railway service, no more newspapers. It was sad isolation and still sadder uncertainty.

Toward evening of the 30th, the anxiety became intense. Of the progress of the war we knew absolutely nothing, but we heard that Uhlans had been seen on the outskirts of the suburbs, towards Cambrai. But others declared that, on the contrary, the German army of invasion had been annihilated.

Monday, August 31st, two young men who were riding their bicycles on the road to Cambrai were stopped, two and a half miles from Arras, by a patrol of seventy-two Uhlans. An officer held one of the young men as hostage and ordered the other to go into Arras and bring some authorities out to confer with them. Two officers went. And toward four in the afternoon, the Germans entered the city, installed themselves at the Hôtel de Ville, and set out thence to visit the hospitals in search of wounded

prisoners and particularly of the Kaiser's relative, the Count of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who had been cared for at the Hospital of Saint-Jean, but evacuated the evening before.

Those who commanded the invaders knew the town well. A Uhlan lieutenant mockingly called a passing workman by his given name: "Henry! Don't you know me? I worked beside you for three years. Have a drink on me, Henry!"

On the 2d of September a trumpeter announced in the streets of Arras that German troops were to pass through the city and the population was urged to keep cool.

The gas-lights in the streets burned all night but the Germans did not come. They were awaited hourly until the 6th, when they entered, three thousand strong, and instead of passing through, occupied the barracks and the citadel.

The staff officers installed themselves in the best hotels. One of them, when asked what room he wished, replied: "Give me number 14. It is comfortable. I occupied it for two months."

The common soldiers, when they deigned to pay for what they consumed, did it with Belgian coin. They delighted to show the people of Arras how they had conquered elsewhere and how they had prepared for conquest here. One of them, for instance, demanded napkins for his party at a restaurant. The proprietor said he had no napkins. "What have you done with those I sold you three months ago?" the soldier asked, tauntingly.

A placard written in German and in bad French and signed, "General von Stein, Governor of Cambrai" (Cambrai is twenty miles away), was posted on the walls in Arras, announcing the defeat of the French armies in Belgium. Nobody believed it. A gamin, ques-

tioned by a German officer as to what he thought of the news, said: "G'wan! Long live France!" and stuck out his tongue at the rage-paralyzed Hun.

On September 8th, the Germans abruptly withdrew from Arras, going toward Amiens. The soldiers thought they were en route to Paris to make triumphant entry there. In reality they were being hurried to the Marne in the hope of stopping the retreat of the five German armies there.

For ten days after the withdrawal of the German troops, the citizens of Arras lived in uncertainty as to what their fate was to be. They heard of the French victory at the Marne, and their hopes were raised. Yet the Germans seemed securely entrenched at Cambrai and their impudence was undiminished; they made many raids in and about Arras and tormented the inhabitants in various bullying ways.

A regiment of Arabs was sent to guard Arras against these depredations. They arrived on September 18th and on that same day three of the dusky sons of the desert, under the command of a French officer, went out on a scouting patrol toward Cambrai.

Fifteen miles from Arras they sighted a troop of about three hundred German dragoons coming toward them. The Arabs were delighted! It was their first sight of an enemy since coming to fight for France, and they wanted to spur their fleet ponies to an attack. Their officer restrained them from engaging "a hundred to one," and they obeyed orders—but angrily. When they got back to Arras they sought their colonel and complained. "To have fear," they reminded him, "is not to know how to make war."

They were soon permitted to get after the Uhlans however; and every German they could see was soon

though he was, was at once recognized by the post-master's son, who had been a guard at Versailles. He hastened ahead of them, this Drouet, reached Varennes before they did, and had given the alarm when they arrived at midnight, just twenty-four hours after leaving the Tuileries and only a few hours' journey from their border destination. Varennes is fifteen miles north-west of Verdun.

The return of the captured fugitives to Paris was much slower and took three days. Lafayette met them on the road, and intervened to save the little bodyguard from destruction by the populace.

I sometimes think that must have been the hardest thing Lafayette ever did for the democracy he so ardently believed in and gallantly fought for.

Defying the King's authority, in 1776, and escaping in disguise to come and help us fight for our independence, was one thing; Lafayette was nineteen then, orphaned, rich, aristocratic, married, romantic, and eager for noble adventure. It was a thrilling experience to be just about three leaps in advance of a *lettre de cachet* which would have consigned him for his disobedience to the Bastille, and to sneak out from a Spanish port and come sailing interminable seas to a strange land to unsheathe his sword for liberty.

That was gallant, but—to a youth of Lafayette's temperament—not difficult.

It was a different sort of courage he had need of when he was a man of thirty and the only noble in France who dared to sign a demand that the King convoke the States-General, or representative assembly of France. Lafayette doubtless knew how he would suffer for that. But it is comparatively easy to choose a course involving suffering for ourselves, and hard

indeed (especially for a man of Lafayette's compassionate nature) to persevere in a course which must bring great suffering to others. And this is what he had to do when he brought his long-time friends, the royal family of France, back from their flight and made them practical prisoners of Paris republicans.

For, in consideration of his services in the National Assembly and of his military record in America, Lafayette was chosen—on the day after the destruction of the Bastille—colonel-general of the new national guard of Paris. And in that capacity he became more or less the "keeper" of the royal family after they were compelled to leave Versailles and take up restricted residence in the Tuileries.

They may well have been grateful, though, to have him thus intrusted, and he was, doubtless, glad of the opportunity he had for saving them humiliation and harm.

But they essayed flight, and it became his duty to bring them back. Probably he knew, or at least feared, to what he was returning them. Marie Antoinette knew! It was at Varennes, in the night following their arrest there, that her "hair of warm, red gold turned white as new-fallen snow."

"Sire," said Lafayette to the King on that return to Paris, "your Majesty knows my attachment to you; but I have not concealed from you that if you separated your cause from that of the people, I should remain on the side of the people."

"That is true," the King replied. "You have acted on your principles. Until lately I believed that you surrounded me with people of your way of thinking, but who did not represent the mind of France. This journey has plainly shown me my mistake, and that such is the general mind."

So it was on his flight toward Verdun that Louis XVI learned what was the mind of France toward democracy.

And then, a little more than a year later, it was at Valmy, near Verdun, that Prussia learned what were the mind and spirit of France in that self-same struggle for democracy.

Late in August, 1792, an army of seventy thousand Prussians, under the Duke of Brunswick, came marching upon Verdun, boasting as they came that by the end of September they would be wining and dining in Paris.

On August 30th they arrived before Verdun and that night they opened bombardment. After fifteen hours, the town surrendered—although the commandant, Beaurepaire, unable to endure the shame of giving up the city he could not defend, blew his brains out in the council whereat surrender was voted.

But some of the townsfolk did not share his sense of humiliation; and among them was a group of hysterical women who dressed themselves in their best to receive the conquerors, and showered them with candy and kisses—the candy being the *dragées* or sugared almonds for which Verdun was even then celebrated.

The Duke of Brunswick was not able to conceal from these silly women how little he admired their behaviour.

Then came the defeat of the Prussians, Austrians, and Hessians at Valmy—and their retreat, without having given those dinners in Paris! And Verdun had the bitter experience of learning what France thought of her easy surrender. This was typically expressed in a piece successfully played in Paris theatres during the Revolution, wherein a cowardly and contemptible character bore the name of *M. Verdun.*

As for the hysterical women, they were taken to

Paris—fourteen of them—and arraigned before the Revolutionary Tribunal which condemned twelve of them to die on the scaffold. Two were girls of only seventeen, and their lives were spared; but they were obliged to witness the execution of the others, among whom one of the two girls had three sisters and the other saw her mother die.

Then came 1870—and more Prussians! Verdun was a small and antiquated fortress representing the defensive science of Vauban's day, more than two centuries before. It offered a gallant enough resistance for three weeks, then capitulated.

France might well have been dubious of the value of Verdun as a French town.

But France had lost Metz, her best defence against the peace-loving German people who were always swarming over the Rhine, armed to the teeth, in the hope of avoiding(!) war. So France must fortify Verdun, which is forty miles west of Metz, on the road to Paris.

Accordingly, in 1875 the little walled city became the centre of a great entrenched camp. And when the Prussians came again it was to storm a collection of sixteen large forts and about twenty smaller ones, defending a castrum thirty miles in circumference and nine miles in its greatest diameter.

The population of the town was about twelve thousand; and the eight thousand or more military who manned those forts in peace times were augmented by fighting men more numerous than any army ever gathered for the defence of a single point of attack.

Upon this group of forts and this little town the armies of the Crown Prince rained, for months and months, something like two hundred thousand shells

a day. There were many days on end when eight hundred shells struck the tiny city.

"We hold Verdun," the lying German war dispatches read.

But it was rather, as the French soldiers were quick to retort, Verdun that held the Germans. Month after dreadful month, the fighting strength of France had to withstand the most terrific onslaught in human history. There was nothing that the Teuton powers could do to take Verdun that was not thrown into the effort.

Perhaps the loss of Verdun would not have meant the triumph of Germany. It is inconceivable that France would not have found another barrier somewhere behind which to entrench herself and fight. No one who knows her spirit doubts that she would have done as Stephen Lauzanne predicted she would do if it were necessary: "When the men are all dead, the women will fight on; and when the women are all dead, the children will fight; and when the children are all gone, the dead will rise and continue the battle against the enemies of mankind."

But, though holding Verdun cost hundreds of thousands of lives, failure to hold it would have added vastly more to the total cost of Germany's assault upon our liberties.

So, Verdun stands forever as a symbol of supremely prepared militarism's defeat at the hands of free men fighting for the liberties of their children and of the world.

And the due of those who made of their bodies a living bulwark so that "They shall not pass," is that Verdun shall be, while time endures, one of the most sacred names in the annals of human courage.

VII

LAON

SOME chroniclers aver that Laon was founded six hundred and eighty years after the great flood. If they went a little further and claimed a little more, they might point to Laon as one of the likeliest places for persons to set up a community after Ararat.

In six hundred and eighty years, fear of another flood may have abated; but other reasons for hill-towns had increased. And it is practically certain that there have been people of some sort at the place now called Laon, for as long as there have been humans in France. No race would have overlooked the defensibility of that great plateau rising sheer on its natural escarpments of stone out of a vast encompassing plain.

You may imagine the prehistoric peoples there, and then the Gauls, and the Romans, and presently the Franks. You may like to recall that Attila besieged it in vain; and that it was Saint Remi, the patrician, born at Laon, who persuaded his townsmen to offer no resistance to Clovis—wherefore Clovis gratefully made Laon the capital of that diocese and of his government.

In the partition of Gaul after the death of Clovis, Laon fell to his youngest (and strongest) son, Clotair; and when Clotair, after having made himself master

of a realm far greater than that of his father, followed the custom of his people and divided it among his four sons, Laon was in the portion bequeathed to the third son, Sigebert, who married Brunhilda, daughter of the Visigothic King of Spain. Brunhilda was an able and interesting woman; and I wish I might take space here to tell a great deal about her in connection with Laon where she spent much time, in a castle at the foot of the mountain, and where she founded the abbey of St. Vincent. But as Laon is fuller of stories than an egg is full of meat, I can do no more than hint at most of them, and enlarge a little upon two or three.

It must suffice to say of Brunhilda, who ruled as regent first for her son and then for her grandsons for nearly forty years after her husband was assassinated by his brother's orders, that she not only put up a splendid fight to rescue France from the horrors attendant upon its ever-recurrent partitions among quarrelling and murdering heirs, but did many things to organize the chaotic conditions prevailing in place of government, and to forward the prosperity of the country. She saw the inadequacy of nearly everybody and everything in her adopted country, and with great courage tried to overcome the worst errors. But her reforms were not appreciated; and in her old age she was defeated in her struggles for her great-grandson, was captured, horribly tortured, and dragged to death at the tail of a horse. Often, as you travel in northeastern France and remark the condition of some ancient highway, you will be told by a native that it is one of Queen Brunhilda's roads. The Visigoths were more Roman than the Romans; and Brunhilda had a more than Roman sense of the value of roads as well as of a centralized government.

If Brunhilda had been able to prevail against the greedy nobles who had their own purely selfish reasons for divided kingdoms and quarrelling kings, many of the events which characterized Laon two and three and four and five centuries after her shocking death, would not have happened.

But Brunhilda was not able to make the nobles of her realm prize the security of the country above their own opportunities for power and enrichment; and the further course of her husband's race was short and almost wholly ignominious. There was one (Dagobert) who made a valiant effort to be a real king; but the others were merest puppets whilst they were gradually eliminated by the rulers of their own households, all-powerful functionaries known as mayors of the palace, who had so much patronage to dispense that they were monarchs in effect for a full century before they felt it advisable to take the name.

Thus came the race of Charlemagne upon the throne. And thus, in turn, it was replaced. Laon was the last corner of all the vast empire of Charlemagne that remained to his descendants a century after his death; and it was at Laon that one after another of the things happened which typify for us the second breaking up of royal power in France under that tyranny of the nobles which was now taking a definite form, becoming an organized régime which we know as feudalism.

For more than a hundred years the crown was passed back and forth between descendants of Charlemagne and scions of the house of Capet, who were counts of Paris and dukes of France. The former made Laon their capital; when they were in power it was the capital of the realm; when the Capetians were in power, Paris was the capital. The great vassals

crowned and decrowned kings at will. They needed, for their purposes, a semblance of unity as furnished by a king; but they wanted powerless kings, so they stood for an elected king, and elected the one they thought they could govern most satisfactorily. They were careful, however, not to go far afield; for there were some in France who remembered that the Pope, at Saint Denis, had warned the Frankish people of the anathema which would fall upon them if they elected a king not of Pepin's race, and among those who feared the anathema or had reason to keep others fearfully in mind of it were the bishops. The church was the direct heir of the Roman form of government, and all its concepts of decency and dignity were shocked by the bandying about of a crown. A king, in their eyes, was the Lord's anointed, and no profane hands could snatch his consecration from him.

So the great vassals were not without some restraint. But there came ravaging down through France hordes of Northmen or Norsemen or Normans, burning and sacking and killing; and Charles the Fat, great grandson of Charles the Great (Charlemagne) did nothing to defend his people against them.

They were unable to take Laon, but they sacked the abbeys at the base of the plateau; and on they went to Paris, where the Count showed himself a stout defender.

This led to the deposition of the Lord's anointed (fat, wheezy, and inadequate) and the election of the Count of Paris to the throne of France.

But he who had made a good count made a poor king; and after he was killed in the civil war brought on by his election, the crown reverted to another Charles, rightful heir to the crown taken from Charles the Fat.

This was Charles the Simple, proclaimed king at Laon in 893 and deposed nearly thirty years later, when Laon was taken from him by another Count of Paris and he himself fell into the hands of Count Herbert of Vermandois and died of starvation in the donjon at Péronne, while Herbert became Count of Laon.

The significant thing about this second triumph of the Counts of Paris was that the one who overthrew the Simple (he was a nephew of the Count who succeeded Charles the Fat) didn't care enough about the crown to accept it—the crown of France mattered so little to a man who was Duke of France, suzerain over that great central area stretching from Bourges to Amiens, and Count of Paris. He suggested his brother-in-law for King of France—and King of France he was, for more than a dozen years. Then the Count of Paris, Hugh—whom history calls Hugh the Great—just to show that he was master of the realm whether the puppet on the throne were his brother-in-law or one of Charlemagne's own heirs, brought the son of Charles the Simple back from England where he had taken refuge, and had him elected King of France, and crowned at Laon on June 19, 936. Louis from Overseas, they called him; he was Louis IV of France (his grandfather Louis the Stammerer, was Louis II; and his uncle was Louis III. Louis I was Charlemagne's son, grandfather of the second Louis.)

Whilst Charles the Simple was languishing at Péronne, his captor, Vermandois, and Raoul whom his brother-in-law had made the nominal King of France, squabbled about Laon. Raoul ceded it to Herbert, who built a castle there and prepared to make it the capital of his vast domain. Then Raoul came and took it back

again in a sort of half-victory which left Herbert in possession of his castle.

Naturally, when Louis IV was crowned there and Laon became his capital, his first thought was to "oust" the vassal who had starved his father to death. His mother undertook to do this while Louis was in Flanders. She failed. Herbert not only kept his castle, but he took the town—the king's capital. Louis, when he heard this, went hurrying to the rescue, retook his capital and with it Herbert's castle.

Then Hugh the Great, misliking this show of power in a puppet he had set up to dance as he pulled the strings, helped Herbert to get Laon back again. The first assault they made was repulsed by Louis, and similarly the second; but they at last succeeded and Louis was made prisoner. The price of his ransom, set by Hugh, was the county of Laon. Louis paid it.

"I had only that fortress," he said, explaining his action; "it was the sole castle whither I could take myself for refuge and my wife and children for safety. But what could I do? I preferred my life to my castle, and I paid with Laon for my liberty."

Louis was rather an up-and-coming person, and might have done a good deal to put his dynasty on a better basis if he had not had to struggle against odds which would have been too much even for a stronger man.

One of these was the shame and treachery of his mother who, after all that her husband and son had suffered at the hands of Herbert of Vermandois, became enamoured of Herbert's fifth son and aided him and his father to despoil her own son of his last stronghold.

Another thing which was a great blow to Louis was the loss of Normandy from his vassalage. His father,

unable to oppose the terrible Normans, had taken another course: he had bought them off with a great grant of land and made their leader Duke of Normandy and a vassal of the French Crown.

But the new Norman duke (son of Rollo, the first duke) was contemptuous of the seed of Charlemagne, and transferred his allegiance to Hugh the Great, the kingmaker.

In spite of all this, however, Louis maintained a dignity which is to me very touching. He "haunts" Laon, for me, as Brunhilda does, and as another does whom I shall mention towards this chapter's end.

He finally got back Laon, I'm glad to say, but did not live long—I can't say "to enjoy it," for the idea of poor Louis enjoying the capital where he had known so much private and public humiliation and sorrow is untenable; shall we say, instead, that he did not live long to be bothered with it?

And after eighteen years of nominal kingship, he left Hugh the Great more completely in control of the situation than he had been when he had Louis made king. Even then, Hugh believed that he served his own purpose better if he remained the power behind the throne; and he secured the election (!) of Louis's son to the Crown of France.

This son, Lothair, reigned thirty-two years without doing anything effective for his country, his people, or his race. But he, too, had the sort of things to contend against which his father had, only some of the private sorrows came even closer. His queen, Emma, had a scandalous liaison with the Bishop of Laon, Adalbéron, who seems to have been implicated with Emma in Lothair's death by poison.

Hugh the Great was long since dead, and succeeded

by his son Hugh, whom we call Hugh Capet. So in accord with his father's policies was Hugh that he "arranged" the election of Lothair's young son as Louis V. This young man "reigned" only a year. He chased his mother and her mitred paramour out of Laon, but he had not cleared the royal household of shame; for his wife, Blanche, is accused of having caused his death—also by poison.

Then Hugh Capet decided that there had been enough of such pretence; and it was Adalbéron who helped Hugh take prisoner the last of Charlemagne's heirs: Charles, brother of Lothair and uncle of the young king just dead. Partly this action of Adalbéron's was because Charles had told young Louis the shameful truth and brought about that expulsion of Emma and himself from Laon; and partly it was because the Church had a state policy opposed to Charles, Duke of Lorraine, becoming King of France.

I won't enter into the details of that policy, here; because they belong more properly in other chapters, on Lorraine.

But Charles marched upon Laon, took it without siege or battle, and imprisoned Emma and her bishop who had been permitted to return there. Hugh hurried to the rescue and made a desperate but vain attempt to regain the royal city. Charles not only resisted him, but made a sortie and drove away Hugh's army in great disorder. Hugh returned with a new army; but it was not armed force that despoiled the last of Charlemagne's heirs of his royal refuge; it was Adalbéron, who induced a warder to open one of the city gates and let Hugh's army in. This was in the night of Holy Thursday, April 12, 991. Charles woke to find himself a prisoner and his cause lost. And

Hugh Capet made the Bishop of Laon the second ecclesiastic in the realm, with only the Archbishop of Reims above him.

Charlemagne had died in 814. His empire was partitioned in 843. In 887 the powerful vassals of France began bestowing the crown of France as they chose. And for a hundred years thereafter the kings of France danced pretty much as their great vassals piped. Then came a new order—or, rather, certain changes which, if they did not seem to work much difference at first, brought with them the seeds of that which was to fructify in a new order, though not until after many generations had come and gone.

Feudalism, the rule of the suzerains or great seigneurs of vast territories, did not begin to decline for more than two hundred years after Hugh Capet got himself elected head of that agglomeration of duchies, counties, and what-not which had not yet begun to think of itself as a nation and did not begin to resemble a nation until great events, sweeping those pioneers into a common current, gave them a sense of unity and drove them to do many things to preserve that unity and to extend its power.

At first, before those outside forces came into play (chief among them the Crusades, of course), there were two influences which tended to hold the realm together in some semblance of unity, under some semblance of a king. One of these was the Church and the other was the people. Both had good reasons for their desire.

Now Laon was only one of the many, many towns in France where this phase of France's history was stirringly enacted; but it epitomizes what was happening at about the same time in nearly every city we are

concerned with in this book. With few exceptions they are cathedral cities; many of them were ruled by bishops with seignorial as well as spiritual powers. Usually the bishops and the people quarrelled violently and bloodthirstily; but all the while they were, although quite unconsciously, working out in their very quarrels something tremendously important to France and, consequently, to all of us.

Before we launch into those events at Laon, let us remind ourselves what sorts of "people" there were in and about Laon, and elsewhere in northern France, about the time Charlemagne's race was disappearing from the scene and the hardy Capets were "cinching" the crown of France so well that their house wore it for eight centuries; and what was the power of the clergy.

In the chapter on Péronne we described the four classes of nobles from the most puissant seigneurs down to the poorest squires between whom and "the people" a great chasm yawned.

Besides them, there were the clergy, subdivided into many classes of their own; and the "people."

The grand seigneurs of the Church were the bishops and the abbots. Both were landed proprietors, usually on a large scale. In general, the bishop's holdings (that is to say, those he held for the bishopric of which he was the temporal and spiritual head) were town properties, more or less associated with the cathedral, though he often had other parcels of land scattered far and wide, whereas the abbot, or abbé, was frequently a county seigneur whose domain was by no means confined to the abbey precincts but made up of lands not only all over the realm but all over the known world.

In the feudal régime the abbeys were more popular

than the secular churches and the cathedrals. The cloistered life made many appeals to people's imagination and to their needs. Men who had repugnance for military life took the frock which gave them immunity from service, and endowed the abbey with their worldly goods. These men formed large communities to beg for their abbey, to pray for the souls of its benefactors, and so on. Even a serf, a runaway slave, could attach himself to an abbey community if he could get there without being retaken. Once there and his declaration of desire to stay there made to the monks, it would be a rash owner indeed who dared to claim him away from the service of God—or of the abbey.

Theoretically, bishops and abbés were elected to their high offices. Bishops were supposed to be the choice of clergy, nobles, and the people. As a matter of fact, the people were not consulted at all, the clergy were represented only by the canons, forming the chapter of the cathedral, and the canons were recruited from younger sons of noble houses. So the nobles alone chose the bishops, although the king had a right called the right of confirmation which he not infrequently used as a veto. A bishop could be consecrated only by the king; and, naturally, the king would not consecrate to such powers as bishops had, any but those he thought would serve his interests. So the bishops and the kings were interdependent in a degree which was about to make some tremendous history.

Abbés also were elected—after a fashion which nearly always secured the office for a scion of nobility. In general, however, the monks were more directly under the Pope, the head of the Church, than under the king, the head of the country. The great "orders"

magistrates, no prisons, no public dealing with the wrongdoer (only private vengeance), no taxes, no compulsory service among freemen.

Clovis, at the time the Franks became dominant in Gaul, was a chieftain who was glad to buttress his position by accepting from the Roman Emperor the office of consul. He called himself the "master of the militia."

His strides toward autocracy are not to be charged solely against his growing lust of power. There was a large element in Gaul—too unorganized to be called a party—which ardently desired monarchical government. Some wanted it for selfish purposes, because a monarchy or other highly organized system takes care of a multitude of persons who are not able to take very good care of themselves. And some wanted it because a strong monarchy was the only defence they could conceive against the horrors of anarchy.

What they hoped for was a strong, stable government able to protect them and their interests but not excessive in its demands of them in taxes or its restrictions of their liberties. And of course they didn't get it.

What they got was a barbarian chieftain who soon called himself "Augustus"; and his successors who not only claimed to be the heirs of the Cæsars, but to be divine—which even the Cæsars did not suppose themselves to be until after they had entered upon immortality.

But they had a sorry time trying to be Cæsars—had those Merovingian monarchs who began with Clovis, about 490, and ended with Chilperic III, in 752.

One reason was the difficulty they had in trying to collect taxes. The bishops, who supported them, had

all Church properties exempted from taxation. The nobles held that they, too, should be exempt; though they were willing to give their sovereigns a present now and then. So, only the simple folk paid. And as they had also to maintain the Church and the landed proprietors, they could not pay the kings enough to keep up an adequate army or administrative staff.

One thing the kings had in abundance—for a while—was land. And they let parcels of land to men who would promise them payment in military and other service. But these men had a tendency to omit the service and to claim the land as their inalienable own.

Nobody wanted to support the divinely appointed kings!

And the kings were not able to do very much about it, for this reason: One of the tribal customs which they could not, or would not, shake off was that of dividing a patrimony equally among all heirs. Every time a king died, his kingdom was subdivided into as many parts as he had sons. And thereupon ensued an internecine strife which did not end until one brother had killed off all the rest, gobbled their patrimony, and disposed of their heirs. By that time he was close to the end of his violent days; and his sons had the same thing to do all over again.

It is small wonder that the rulers of this race made little impression upon the civilization of Roman Gaul; that they left most things substantially unadvanced beyond the point whereat they found them.

Senlis was the scene of many an event connected with those monarchs who gave France little besides her name. And then, for a very long time, she went on her way inconspicuously but always developing,

not only with the spirit of the times but often an honourable distance in advance thereof.

Her people seem to have had qualities that kept them out of a great many difficulties their neighbours got into.

This is illustrated by their behaviour in the religious wars. When the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Eve was planned, Senlis was ordered to do as Paris did. Instead, her Protestant citizens were notified to hide themselves securely away, and no blood was shed.

The town was notably loyal to the crown of France. But that was probably not the only reason why it adhered to Henry III and refused to join with the League against him and against all religious tolerance.

However, the Duke of Mayenne took Senlis by surprise. His forces were soon chased out, with the aid of two of the Montmorencys and some of their vassals.

Back almost immediately came the Leaguers, with eight thousand infantry and a strong cavalry force, and a lot of cannon.

The town was in a poor state for defence. Its fortifications were not in good, up-to-date condition; victuals and munitions were sadly lacking, and many of the best fighting men had gone away rather than be impressed into the service of the League and against the King.

The defence was in the hands of M. William de Montmorency, who was the Seigneur of Chantilly, eight miles away, a town so closely identified in history with Senlis that they have been called "two fingers of the same hand." (This gentleman seems also to have had another estate by whose name he is most frequently called, probably to distinguish him from

his cousin Louis de Montmorency; and he is referred to in most accounts as M. de Thore.)

Compiègne was notably loyal to the King. And M. de Thore knew that succour was being mustered at Compiègne to come to his relief. But he feared he would not be able to hold out until it arrived.

The rescuers knew the need of haste. But they were having a lot of trouble getting under way. It was necessary for them to take large quantities of powder and shot; and money to pay for these was not forthcoming. The munition merchants were obdurate; they would not deliver up their goods without cash in advance or at least the best security.

M. La Noue, the celebrated Huguenot soldier, who was in charge of the relief expedition, put his property in pawn to the merchants, saying: "Very well, then, I will bear the expense. Let him guard his money who values it above his honour. While I have a drop of blood and an acre of land, I shall employ them for the defence of my country."

He reached Senlis, eighteen miles away, at a time when the town could not hold out another day. And soon the besiegers were in full flight.

The town of Senlis decided that each year a fête should be held to celebrate this deliverance and that "prayers should be offered not only for the king but also for the brave La Noue, although he was a Huguenot." And for many years this was done—long after the death of La Noue and in spite of the fact that Huguenots are even less frequently prayed for when dead than when alive.

It would be interesting indeed to know how the prevailing winds of opinion in a certain community blow so tolerantly.

Senlis has always been distinguished for her freedom from dissensions, and for her mild amenableness to all that promised good for the nation.

She has never been splendid nor specially distinguished. But in the years when Chantilly was the scene of so much magnificence, more or less of it must have overflowed upon Senlis, eight miles to eastward, along the northern edge of the superb Chantilly forest.

When Louis XIV was being entertained at Chantilly in a manner which made Versailles seem mean to him; and when Racine, Molière, La Fontaine, Fénelon, Madame de Sévigné, and Boileau came thither as guests of the great Condé—then Senlis must have enjoyed at least echoes of the festivities.

There are a number of memorials of her past still visible at Senlis, besides the battered bulk of the twelfth century cathedral with its soaring tower, and the old Gallo-Roman walls.

But the havoc wrought by the modern Huns, who declared that they had been ordered to treat Senlis as they had treated Louvain, was horrible. They entered the quiet little town about three o'clock on the afternoon of September 2, 1914. The Mayor, M. Odent, was immediately arrested, together with a number of civilians. And incendiary fires were lighted which consumed a hundred and five houses. Ten civilians were murdered in the town that day; and at eleven o'clock that night, the mayor and six other citizens were shot to death in a beet-field at Chamant, outside the town.

You will visit that beet-field when you go to Senlis. Many generations of pilgrims and sightseers will go there. Where those brutal murders occurred, there is now a low wooden enclosure around the mound beneath

which M. Odent's body lay for ten days. In the midst of the sacred spot, a white stone surmounted by a cross bears M. Odent's name and the date of the crime—nothing more. Some boxwood grows there, and two or three flowering plants. All around, a sea of green beet-leaves billows to the very edge of the little, low fence. The far marges of the waving green sea are bordered by tall, ancient trees—except one, whereon Senlis stands outlined against the sky to which the mutilated towers of her venerable churches cry out for justice.

To this spot, the teachers of Senlis now bring their pupils. The children carry flowers with which to strew the mound. And there they hear retold the story "of a man good and modest, who died a martyr for his country." One day a teacher noticed one of his youngest pupils lingering near the mound after the others had moved away. This little lad had not been designated to lay flowers on the empty grave, and the teacher watched him closely. The child was evidently gripped by emotion. He was very grave, and trembled. When he thought himself unobserved, he furtively drew out from beneath his little black pinafore a minute, greyish object which he laid tenderly on the tomb; it was his favourite plaything, a little toy cannon, which he bestowed in homage where a French hero gave his life for his country.

The memory of France for those who have served her liberties or her civilization is very long. She will not forget M. Odent, nor the way the Germans came in 1914.

For a long time during the early part of the war, the Great Headquarters of the French Army were at Chantilly. Later, Senlis, became headquarters for

General Foch—first in his capacity of second in command, then in his capacity of Generalissimo, and lastly in his capacity as Supreme Commander of all the allied armies. From the ancient town where Celts and Romans and Franks and their successors ruled, the quiet Gascon who incarnates all the best that France has developed in twenty centuries issued the orders that saved not France only but all the world.

His fame will dominate Senlis forever. Always, I think, visitors to the great forest-embowered town will wish to see, first its Gallo-Roman remains, and then its places associated with Foch; to think, first of its far past in the dawn of French history and then of its nearer past in the dawn of a new world.

V

COMPIÈGNE

COMPIÈGNE is situated just below the junction of the Aisne and the Oise, and nearly surrounded by the forest of Compiègne, which is fifty-eight miles in circumference and criss-crossed by more than three hundred and fifty roads and paths. Fenimore Cooper said it was the most beautiful forest he saw in the Old World and most reminded him of the sombre retreats of the Mohicans.

It has always, until recently, abounded in game and was one of the "happy hunting grounds" of French kings in ages when there may or may not have been Mohicans in the forests of this undiscovered country.

The kings of France had a succession of palaces there for as many centuries as France had kings.

The first of these royal residences was given by Charles the Bald for a monastery, sometime about the middle of the ninth century. It became the celebrated abbey of Saint-Corneille, which was destroyed during the revolution, after nigh on a thousand years of history.

When Charles the Bald had given the palace of his forefathers for a religious house, he built a new domicile, close to the bank of the Aisne, where the bridge was flung across to the north bank. This new royal dwell-

ing had a great defence tower guarding the southern bridgehead and facing toward the country whence the Normans were then coming on so many ravaging expeditions.

This served the kings until St. Louis's day—some four hundred years later—when it was given by that monarch to found a convent of Jacobins.

Charles V built a palace on the east of town, close to the forest's edge. Other sovereigns down to and including Louis XIV added to this third residence. Then, in 1728, Louis XV ordered his ablest architect to erect a new royal mansion combining the utmost magnificence with more "livability" than Versailles or any of the existing palaces possessed.

This superb palace with its wealth of furnishings came down to us less disturbed by mob ravages than any other in France.

The history of Compiègne is chiefly the history of its successive royal palaces.

Charlemagne was so fond of the place that one finds many references to his sojourns there—references not only to the hunts which the mighty Emperor there pursued, with his twelve fabled knights and their great retinue, but to other phases of his puissance. One of the earliest of these latter dates back to the reign of his father, and it may or may not have involved Charlemagne—but probably did. It was a national assembly which met, on Pepin's call, at Compiègne in 756, and during the course of which Pepin received an embassy from the head of the Eastern Empire. These envoys brought him, as a gift from the Emperor of Constantinople, the first organ which had been seen in France. Pepin presented it to the abbey of Saint-Corneille at Compiègne—the institution to which his

great-grandson gave the old palace that had housed generations of French kings.

It was in that palace that Charlemagne received the Arab governor of Saragossa come to entreat his intervention in Spain—which resulted in the defeat at Roncevaux, and the death of Roland the most celebrated of all the knights of Charlemagne who for many centuries sustained the burden of supplying Europe with most of its legendary romance and minstrelsy.

Separation of the probable facts of this expedition to Spain and what occurred when Roland was killed, from the myths and imaginings wherewith generations of story-tellers embellished it, is a hopeless task. Fortunately we do not have to attempt it here. In the *Chanson de Roland*, Charlemagne is represented as encamped before Cordova when he received the Saracen embassy. But historians who have specialized in the local history of the Compiègne region locate Charlemagne and his knights there when the fateful expedition into Spain was decided on.

They also declare that Charlemagne was at Compiègne when he received one, at least, of the two gift-bearing embassies from Haroun-al-Raschid, caliph of Bagdad and *Arabian Nights* hero, who was almost as generous a source of romance as Charlemagne himself.

Then the mighty Emperor passed on into a specially deathless immortality, and Compiègne on the great forest's edge was the scene of no more pilgrimages from the renowned of all the earth.

Instead, it was at Compiègne that his son and successor, Louis, was made to consent to the incarceration of his empress whose aspirations in her son's behalf made her displeasing to Louis's sons by his first marriage.

And it chanced to be at Compiègne that the last

descendant of Charlemagne who wore the crown of France, was crowned; and there died, a year later.

However, the kings of France continued to like the town and to favour its citizens.

When King John was carried off captive to England and his son (afterward Charles V) wished to convoke the States-General, or national legislative body, in a city upon whose fidelity he could rely absolutely, it was on Compiègne that his choice fell. And when the most important men of the realm were sent to England as hostages for the King's release, two citizens of Compiègne were among them.

This should have guaranteed Compiègne some gratitude from King John's descendants, but it did not. His grandson, the mad King Charles VI, in the very first year of his reign, alienated the citizens of Compiègne by his unjust demands and taxes. They rebelled. And their example was followed by many other towns.

When Charles VI needed the support of all his subjects against the encroachments of Burgundy, Compiègne repaid his ungrateful rapacity by opening her gates to the Duke of Burgundy.

Charles at once marched against the rebels and suppressed them. On this occasion he went to St. Denis and took the oriflamme, the red and gold banner of the kings of France. Some historians say that this was the last appearance of that celebrated standard. Others aver that it was seen at Agincourt, a few years later.

Nevertheless, when Charles VII was en route to Reims—under Jeanne d'Arc's safe convoy—to be crowned, the commune of Compiègne returned him, when he demanded their acceptance of his sovereignty, a respectful and dutiful reply, declaring that they

recognized him as their king (although his mother had sworn his birthright away) and would receive him as such whenever it pleased him to come to their city. They further asseverated that they were masters of their town, and that if the English dared to attack it, it should be stoutly defended against them.

"They soon," says an old Picardy annalist, "had occasion to prove the sincerity of their words."

The Duke of Burgundy came to lay siege to Compiègne, where the royal interests were represented by William de Flavy, whom Charles VII had named governor.

Jeanne rushed to the rescue of Compiègne.

Already [that old Picardy chronicle continues] she had fulfilled the divine mission entrusted to her. It was only thirteen months since she had raised her standard for France; but that time had sufficed for her to deliver Orléans, to conduct the king to Reims, to unnerve the English, and to restore to the French that confidence which had forsaken them. Her task was accomplished. She herself knew that her command would be brief; she had so declared, from the beginning. "It is necessary to use me," she said. "I shall last for a year or little more." And it was needful that it should be so; for if Jeanne had remained long at the head of the armies, the prestige which surrounded her would soon have vanished. Thus far, she was an envoy of God; she was not looked upon as an ordinary captain. For the accomplishment of the designs of Providence, it was necessary that she perish; the sacrifice had to be made complete. It was not at Compiègne that the victim was to be immolated; but it was at Compiègne that she was to fall into the hands of her executioners.

The twenty-fifth of May, 1430, on Ascension eve, at five o'clock in the afternoon, Jeanne d'Arc, accompanied by Poton de Saintrailles and at the head of five to six

hundred combatants, made a sortie by the Porte du Pont, to surprise Baudon de Noyelle who, with his men, was lodged at Margny. Chance decreed that she should meet, there, Jean de Luxembourg, Crequi, and eight or ten other gentlemen who had come to confer on the method of prosecuting the siege. They were furiously charged by the besieged. Crequi was wounded in the face. But the English, in cantonment at Venettes, and the Burgundians, in possession of Clairoy, hearing the cries of the combatants, hastened to the rescue. The besieged (the soldiers of Jeanne) were obliged to retire. The Maid who, during the retreat, took up her place in the very last rank, drove back her flock like a shepherd, and without much loss. But at the Porte there was some confusion, because everybody could not enter through that narrow gate at one time. The Burgundians, in close pursuit, charged the struggling mass; an archer grasped the Maid by her hauberk, dragged her from her horse, and she surrendered herself to Lyonel, bastard of Vendôme, who took her to Margny.

The siege of Compiègne lasted for six months and was lifted by the withdrawal of the English and Burgundians on October 26th.

From his castle at Chinon (where he was when Jeanne came to him to offer her services for France) Charles VII issued under date of December 18, 1430, the following manifesto:

Charles, by the grace of God, King of France, be it known to all present and to come, that we, considering the great loyalty and goodwill that our well-beloved the citizens of our city of Compiègne have shown toward us in holding the said city for us, and the great and virtuous resistance they sustained against our enemies and adversaries during the siege that our enemies held the town in for six months, etc. . . .

where the sentence ends I do not know, but this is the beginning of it; and somewhere or other in due course of time, Charles (who must have been extraordinarily long-winded) arrived at the announcement that for the duration of his reign the inhabitants of Compiègne who had fought during the siege would be exempt from all taxes, subsidies, and imposts except the duty on salt.

Further, he conferred upon them the privilege of acquiring and holding noble fiefs. And he authorized them to take in the royal demesne of the forest all the wood necessary for the reconstruction of their houses ruined during the siege.

This was very proper and decent of Charles. But we wonder if, as he planned and either penned or dictated this expression of royal gratitude, he was moved by no impulse of appreciation or of pity concerning the Maid of France who had made him a king and given him a country.

William de Flavy has by many historians been accused of betraying Jeanne d'Arc. Others doubt it. And still others deny it.

Whatever is said in his behalf exculpating him of this crime is certainly not based upon his incapability of bad behaviour.

He was miserly, debauched, and cruel; and he committed so many evil and unjust acts that the bitter complaints of Compiègne citizens succeeded in having him removed from office. But on his promise to behave with more moderation, he was reinstated. Whereupon he proceeded to more odious tyrannies than ever before. He caused the arrest of the Maréchal of France, Pierre de Rieux, and ordered him put to death. (Either he must have known that the maréchal was

not protected by the King's favour; or else he was presuming vastly on his own immunity.) And soon afterward he subjected his wife's father to the same treatment. Thereupon his wife, whom he continually outraged, began to fear for her life; so she arranged with her cruel lord's barber to cut William's throat whilst shaving him. To make sure of the barber's dependability, she was present when the deed was done. When the serving-man's stroke proved, from fright or from other cause, too feeble, she snatched the razor from his hand and herself made the deed definitive. This took place in William de Flavy's château of Neelle in Tardenois (where his murders had been committed), March 15, 1449.

Shortly afterwards, relatives of the murdered Maréchal of France, Pierre de Rieux, began suit against the *memory* of William de Flavy and against his heirs.

For sixty years this case was pending in the high courts of France. Then, under Louis XII, there came a decree of *parlement*, dated at Paris the 7th of September, 1509, ordering the erection, at the expense of the Flavy family, of a stone cross at Compiègne. The cross was to be in the rue du Pont, at the entrance of the great tower (if not the one built by Charles the Bald, then doubtless its successor guarding the bridge across the Aisne) facing the Hôtel-Dieu or hospital. This was the inscription on it:

By decree of the parliamentary court, pronounced the seventh day of September of the year of grace 1509, in support of the high and puissant seigneur Jean, sire de Rieux, count of Harcourt, maréchal of Brittany, against Jean de Morainvillers and damoiselle Jeanne de Flavy, his wife, as part reparation for the excesses, crimes, and

misdemeanours committed and perpetrated by William de Flavy on the person of the noble and puissant seigneur Pierre de Rieux, maréchal of France, taken and imprisoned without judicial authority in the year 1440, while in the service of the king, and thereafter inhumanly held prisoner by the said Flavy in his castle of Neelle in Tardenois, making of it a private prison, wherein the captive met death. To the perpetual memory of this, is this cross here set up, the twenty-first day of September, 1513. Pray God for him.

Those who, for no love of Flavy, exonerate him from the charge of having betrayed Jeanne d'Arc, think that if he had been believed guilty of that dastardly deed, some mention of it, also, would have been graven by act of *parlement* on the cross set up to execrate his memory.

The erection of this cross seems to me one of the most interesting of all the "avenging" stories. France abounds in memorials of famous expiations; but so far as I know them they are all repentance offerings of the culprits themselves—like the Lady Chapel in the cathedral at Lisieux, which Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, built in contrition for his condemnation of Jeanne d'Arc to be burnt as a witch; this is the sole instance that comes to mind, as I write, of a memorial set up to perpetuate the story of a crime.

However, places have a way of making such memorials of themselves, without aid of *parlement*. The old cross condemning William of Flavy is long since gone from Compiègne. It will not be necessary to set up there anything condemning William of Potsdam.

Shortly before the erection of this cross, the new town hall of Compiègne was completed. It was a beautiful building, with a high belfry; and since 1880

there has been in front of it an inspiring monument to Jeanne d'Arc.

Compiègne was so loyal to Henry III in his struggles against the League, that when he was dying of the assassin's thrust he desired to be buried in the abbey-church of Saint-Corneille rather than in the royal tombs at St. Denis, where his grave might be profaned by his enemies.

The letter is in the town archives, in which Henry IV ordered the governor and citizens of Compiègne to prepare for the late king's burial. This was signed August 14, 1589—two weeks after the death of Henry III.

A year and a half later Henry IV came to Compiègne and gave orders that the coffin of his predecessor be made ready for transfer to St. Denis. The body was on its chariot and the cortège was about to move when supplications were made to the King to leave the remains at Compiègne at least until the realm was all at peace. He acceded. But there is an old tale which relates that what was told Henry of Navarre was this: That an astrologer had said Henry III would not be interred at St. Denis until after his successor had been assassinated.

Henry was no man to toy with predictions. At least, he thought he was not, and he managed to avoid doing it—for quite a while. But the importunities of Marie de' Medici won; he "dared" the prediction that his death would follow her coronation; after ten years of resisting her, he yielded—and was stabbed to death on the very morrow of that ceremony.

In August, 1698, Louis XIV had a grand review of sixty thousand soldiers at Compiègne, and utilized them in adding panoply to the magnificent fêtes he gave in honour of Madame de Maintenon.

It was in the new palace at Compiègne that Louis XV received the little fourteen-year-old Austrian Archduchess, Marie Antoinette, come to meet so tragic a destiny in France. And again, it was at Compiègne that Napoleon received another Archduchess, Marie Louise, come to participate in the downfall of that empire for whose sake Napoleon had sacrificed Josephine.

The great east-and-west highway between Vienna and France, by which Marie Antoinette and Marie Louise travelled to their respective bridegrooms, crosses the Austro-Bavarian frontier at a little town named Braunau; and there it was arranged that the new Empress of France should be surrendered by her native land to the representatives of her espoused country. At that point her Austrian retinue turned back, and she was taken in charge by those the Emperor had delegated to fetch his bride to him.

On they came, to Munich, to Strasbourg, to Nancy, and then—for what reason I know not—instead of proceeding straight to Paris, they turned north at Vitry, toward Châlons, and Reims.

Napoleon must have had some sentiment about entering his capital with his bride, instead of having her come there to meet him; so the marriage ceremony was arranged to take place at St. Denis, then four miles beyond Paris on the road north, but now not separated from the city except arbitrarily.

The Empress [writes that excellent gossip, Constant, Napoleon's *valet de chambre*] journeyed only by short stages, and a fête attended her in each city through which she passed. Every day the Emperor sent her a letter written by his own hand, and she answered them regularly. The first letters of the Empress were very short, and probably rather cool, for the Emperor said nothing about them.

But the others grew longer and warmer by degrees, and the Emperor read them with transports of pleasure. He awaited their arrival with the impatience of a twenty-year-old lover, and never found the couriers quick enough, although they rode their horses to death. . . .

The Emperor was incessantly cursing the ceremonial, and the fêtes which delayed the arrival of his young bride. A camp had been formed near Soissons for the reception of the Empress. The Emperor was at Compiègne, where he issued a decree containing several acts of beneficence and indulgence on the occasion of his marriage. When His majesty knew the Empress was within ten leagues of Soissons, he could no longer restrain his impatience, and shouted to me with all his lungs: "Ohé! Oh! Constant; order me a carriage without a livery, and come and dress me." The Emperor wished to take the Empress by surprise, and present himself without being announced, and he laughed like a child at the effect this interview must produce. His toilet was made with more exquisite cleanliness, if that were possible, than usual, and, with the coquetry of glory, he put on the grey greatcoat which he had worn at Wagram.

Thus prepared, His Majesty entered a carriage with the King of Naples. How the meeting of their Majesties took place is known. In the little village of Courcelles, the Emperor met the last courier, who was only a few minutes in advance of the Empress. It was raining in torrents, and, for the sake of shelter, the Emperor alighted under the porch of the village church. When the carriage of the Empress came near, the Emperor made a sign to the postilions to stop. The equerry who rode beside it, perceiving him, made haste to lower the step and announce his Majesty who was considerably displeased and said to him: "Didn't you see that I signed you to be silent?" But this little spurt of ill-humour vanished like a flash. The Emperor threw his arms about the neck of Marie Louise, who had a portrait of her husband in her hand, and who said to him

with a charming smile looking alternately at the Emperor and his likeness: "Your portrait does not flatter you."

A magnificent supper had been prepared at Soissons for the Empress and her cortège, but the Emperor ordered them to go on at once to Compiègne. Their Majesties having arrived at Compiègne, the Emperor presented his own hand to the Empress and conducted her to her apartment.

Compiègne was often the residence of Marie Louise; and to remind her of a feature she had loved at Schönbrunn, Napoleon had constructed an iron-trellised walk nearly a mile long, leading from the superb east terrace of the Château to the forest.

The third empire of France favoured Compiègne not less than the first and the second—or, Charlemagne's and what is designated the First Empire. Napoleon III and Eugénie held many brilliant functions there.

The new palace was indeed more "liveable" than most of the royal residences of France. But the attraction at Compiègne was, to the last of French monarchs as to the first, the forest—that indescribably beautiful and storied woodland where Charlemagne hunted, with Roland, Oliver, and his other knights, and with the ambassadors of Haroun-al-Raschid; where Charles the Wise took counsel with Bertrand Du Guesclin, in the pauses of the chase; where Jeanne d'Arc heard, doubtless, her Voices and may have been advised by them that she, like her Lord, must be lifted up in suffering, to make complete her service; where Francis I honoured the great Constable of France, Anne de Montmorency; where Henry of Navarre pursued game and gallantries, and Louis XV essayed to teach his ten-year-old son the craft of war; where Marie Antoinette laughed and tilted her hooped brocades; where Napoleon strode in meditation, thinking on Charlemagne.

Profounder peace I have never felt in the world about and the worlds above me than I have known in that Rond-Royal Hotel which was recently Dr. Carrel's hospital. My room there opened upon the forest. At night, when the lights were out, the stars seemed fastened to the tips of giant evergreens—so high up did the points soar, and so low did the stars hang down. The murmurs of the forest were mere whispers in the velvet night, and almost—one fancied—one could hear the tread of marching constellations. While up from the garden below came dew-distilled perfume of thousands of roses.

More than the rivers, the uplands, and the plains [writes Gabriel Alphaud] the forests enshrine the history of the country. . . . In the midst of their might and their silence, of their sovereign tranquillity and their impenetrable majesty, the human dramas of love, the chase, and war, unfold and refold, prolong themselves and wear themselves out. In their sacred hush, as in that of sanctuaries, the echoes of history take refuge and great deeds live on. . . . The oaks of the ancient forest of Dodona, yielded, aforetime, marvellous prophecies, because they were aware of the past of Greece. The oaks of the forests of Valois have held in their boughs the gold and silver tissue of our military annals. Beloved of Merovingians and of Capetians, delight of the kings and queens who succeeded them, their intervals of mourning have been caused only by the cruelty of the foreigner. In their glades, in the light of glad mornings, the memory of our national heroines floats like a perfume; in storm-racked nights, the depredations of the enemy reappear like spectres moaning self-reproach.

"The cruelty of the foreigner" has sore-stricken the forest of Compiègne these years just past, but that which it has suffered in the late war has despoiled it of

some physical loveliness only—and that is reparable; and the intangible glory which was there before has been immeasurably magnified.

The forest of enchantment, with its illimitable aisles of columned majesty, where every age speaks of beauty and of courage and of love to the wayfaring worshipper, was made a warren of red death. The sunlit glades, whence Charlemagne's horn sent its unmistakable tones summoning his knights, were heaped with hideous débris. Where God's vaulted nave and traceried choir mocked man's sublimest efforts in his psalms of Gothic building, there were shattered pillars stripped stark of all their foliations, and the wind that whistled past them was the rushing wind of death.

But the red hand of the destroyer was held there, and the forest of Compiègne will burgeon at spring-time in new lacery of tender green like that which weaves its meshes of fairy charm in the portions of the Bois de Boulogne which German guns raked in 1870. At autumn, the mellow air in Compiègne wood will be flecked with gold and russet brilliance as the tiny leaves of young oaks and beeches come fluttering down.

The rapt worshipper holding—or seeming to hold—his noisy heart-beats so the holy silence may not be disturbed, will wonder, as a startled rabbit flees across the brown, beam-flecked path, what can have moved the little furry thing to flight. Then he will hear it also, borne on the still air from a not-distant glade: Charlemagne's horn summoning Roland and Oliver to the hunting repast whereat they shall hear from the lips of his own envoys tales of the Great Caliph of Bagdad. And, ere that sound has gone rollicking down the forest aisles, the listener will hear a rushing as of

great wings far overhead, a drumming as of some monster bird, risen from the underbrush in flight.

Then he will hold his heart-beats indeed, for he (if he is wise) will know who rides above the treetops: it is Guynemer, peerless knight of the air, flying again over his old home on the forest's edge and cutting wild youthful capers in the zenith, to make his mother and sisters look up in recognition of the only birdman who would dare such antics.

Forever and forever, while hearts in human breasts beat high for heroes, the sons of men will go to Compiègne and venerate the memory of that lad whose name is on the Pantheon, whose fame is in every heart in France, and whose spirit rides the winds to all eternity. "No man knows his resting-place"; no flowers can deck his grave. Whether God buried him, as He buried Moses, or took him heavenward in a chariot of fire as Elijah went, no one knows. Of all the glorious eaglets who flew for France and died for France, Fame marked the lad of Compiègne for legend; and with a sense of fitness truly French, she snatched him from sepulture, left no trace of his mortality. But the rustle of his rushing wings will call vision-seeing eyes aloft, in the clearings of Compiègne, for ages on end.

Many forests of France have become newly consecrate in the late war; but none of them, it seems to me, has been quite so much enhanced as a shrine of great memories as Compiègne has been.

For it was thither that the German emissaries went to sue for peace at any price, to sign terms of capitulation which no other nation on earth would have accepted while there was a man, woman, or child of her blood left alive to fight for her honour!

Four miles west of the town of Compiègne, the road to Soissons forks and a very ancient route through the forest leads south-westward through Pierrefonds to Villers-Cotterets. The point where the road forks is Rethondes. It was there that the military railway carriage of Marshal Foch was stationed when he received the German envoys. It was there that he read to them those armistice terms which stripped their guilty nation of every instrument of aggression and humbled her wicked pride in the dust. It was there that they signed those terms—and from there that they slunk away to their snarling people already deserted by their craven "War Lord."

No structure is associated with this event,—only a railway carriage which will doubtless become part of some military museum (probably Des Invalides), and the forest.

Some memorial will in all probability be placed at that crossroads whence the order was issued which stopped hostilities in the bitter world war. No one will ever again pass that point without reflecting, as he is capable, on things momentous beyond designation.

I hope the wayside reminder will be simple—if the French erect it, it is quite sure to be—and in keeping with the greatness of Foch; anything pretentious would be an affront to him. His preference would, probably, be for a cross in a clearing—a place where the men and women and children saved from the Beast and his dominion could give thanks to God for the valour and steadfastness of those through whom came Victory.

As time goes on, they who walk those forest aisles will meet Foch therein, as well as Charlemagne, and

the little Maid, and Navarre, and Napoleon. And over their heads will beat the deathless wings of France's second Roland—the knight whose charger gallops eternally 'twixt earth and heaven: Guynemer.

VI

VERDUN

VERDUN has become a sacred name, one of the most sacred in all the annals of France and of civilization. But although Verdun has been a city for longer than any one quite knows, scarcely one event in her many centuries of history before 1915 was of a sort to endear the place to France or, indeed, to any one.

Whoever built the first town there on the heights above the left bank of the Meuse, must have made an exceptionally good stronghold; for Syagrius, when Clovis defeated him at Soissons in 486, and hotly pursued him, fled all the way to Verdun (more than a hundred miles) for refuge. Verdun was one of the last cities in northern Gaul to accept Clovis, who did not force its capitulation until 502.

His successors spent more or less time at Verdun; but no event of special importance links any of their names with the place.

Then, once upon a time when the race of Clovis had been supplanted by another, Charlemagne got very wroth against Verdun and, to punish and intimidate it, destroyed its ancient walls and ordered their great stones carted away to Aix-la-Chapelle (a matter of a hundred and sixty miles or more) to build his octagonal church there.

The occasion for this anger was the refusal of Verdun to accept a bishop of Charlemagne's appointment. The bishop was an Italian; and thereby hangs a tale.

For Charlemagne was playing the Church, to win, as three centuries before the Church had played Clovis.

The kings of Clovis's line had dwindled to comparative nothingness; the latter of them were merely nominal kings, holding the office by tolerance of their powerful nobles. (There was, indeed, Dagobert, a wise and vigorous ruler; but his very strength served to show how strong were the forces arrayed against the Crown and how the situation had got beyond the control even of a man exceptionally able and fitted to rule.)

The real rulers of the realm were the mayors of the palace who controlled the royal patronage, dispensed the royal favours. For a while, these powerful functionaries deemed it safest and best to operate from behind a throne. They lacked nothing of kingship but the name, and they did not want to risk an uprising by dispossessing the puppets who wore the crown. Nobody cared a tinker's cuss about these puppets. But many had a superstition about them; and many more preferred a weakling king, whom divers persons could manage, to a powerful usurper stepping out of the ranks of nobles into a position of command over the rest.

But when Charles Martel drove off the Saracens and performed other great exploits which wrote his name high on the scrolls of fame, it began to seem as if there would be no impiety in preferring "the saviour of Christendom" to the straw-man wearing the diadem. Charles, however, did not essay to make himself king. And after his death, his two sons chose to set up an-

other puppet of the race of Clovis, and to rule from behind his chair.

Then the elder brother, Carloman, retired to a monastery and left the younger, Pepin, in full sway. And Pepin decided to wear a crown.

His first step was to consult the Pope; to ask whether the Pope thought it right for a man to play the game and not take the name. The Pope cpined that Pepin should be king. So Pepin "fired" the dummy on the throne—or, rather, he prevailed upon the Frankish people to do so, in a national assembly he called at Soissons—and got himself elected king. Also, he got the Pope to anoint him, and to warn the Frankish people that if ever they chose a king outside of Pepin's race, they would be completely and irrevocably damned by the Holy See.

In return for this "clincher" Pepin rewarded the Pope with what is known in history as "the donation of Pepin," which was the nucleus of the temporal power of the papacy.

Charlemagne was Pepin's son. He had vast plans, and he needed the Church to support them. Being a king was not enough for him; he purposed becoming an emperor over dominions vaster than those of the Cæsars.

The Pope, perhaps, wanted that Italian bishop at Verdun. Charlemagne had plans involving the Pope. So, probably to convince the Holy See of his complete devotion to its desires, Charlemagne dismantled Verdun and left it defenceless except as nature had endowed it for resistance.

Well, Charlemagne went on his way, and on Christmas day, in the year 800, amid a great assembly at St. Peter's Church in Rome, the Pope (Leo III) crowned

him, then knelt in homage whilst the multitude shouted acclaim and allegiance to the Emperor of all the world.

He was fifty-eight years old, then, a large, paunchy, bull-necked man, white-haired, clean-shaven, big-eyed, animated in expression and tremendously active in movements. He was a light sleeper, a small eater, an exceedingly moderate drinker, domestic in his habits, devoted to his family, a lover of music and of hunting, an almost inordinate bather. He spoke several languages, collected books, delighted in the talk of learned men, but could not learn to write.

He ruled as emperor for nearly fourteen years and left his vast domains to his only surviving legitimate son, Louis, who did little or nothing for a quarter of a century but struggle to hold that which was bequeathed to him. Louis had four sons, of whom the second, Pepin, predeceased him. Of the others, Lothair and Louis were sons of Louis's first wife, Hermengarde, and Charles was the son of his second wife, Judith. The fight of these three men for the empire of their grandfather, Charlemagne, began long before their father's death and continued for some time after it. Lothair claimed it all, and Charles and Louis leagued against him. In the chapter on Strasbourg we shall see how they covenanted there in protection of their rights, and how the oath they took is the first specimen that has come down to us of the speech which was to become the French language.

Lothair recognized his inability to hold against Charles and Louis; so, in August, 843, there was signed at Verdun (which Charlemagne in his pursuit of empire had humiliated) the treaty by which the Empire was divided into three parts. Lothair got, broadly speaking, northern Italy, eastern and south-

eastern France, and much of what is now Rhenish Prussia and Netherlands. Louis got Germany east of the Rhine. Charles got a section now comprised in central, northern, and western France and southern Belgium. (Verdun was alternately French and German for a hundred and forty years, then German for nearly six centuries.)

This Verdun treaty day has been called "the birthday of modern nationalities," and is the event by which Verdun was best known in history, until 1915. It was seven hundred years before another imperial domination in Europe; and then Emperor Charles V garrisoned Verdun to protect his flank when he invaded France. Henry II retook Verdun for France, and it has ever since been French—and ever will be! "They shall not pass."

There is not much of general interest in the history of Verdun during many centuries; but in quaint local chronicles I find mention of a few things you may care to recall when you visit this shrine to the deathless memory of those who said: "They shall not pass." Verdun long had a celebrated abbey, dedicated to Saint-Vanne, on the height where the citadel now stands. The vineyards of Saint-Vanne covered the sunny slopes to the Meuse, and the abbey was a favoured place of refuge and retreat for persons of many sorts.

In the eleventh century a dreadful pestilence visited Verdun and took a terrible toll in lives. The only cure for this fever was at the abbey where the afflicted drank the wine of those sunny slopes, mixed with "scrapings" from a stone of the Holy Sepulchre brought from the Holy Land by an abbot of Saint-Vanne. But this potion was completely efficacious

only in the cases of those who solemnly swore to observe "the truce of God"—that is to say, to refrain from all strife from Thursday evening until Monday morning of each week.

When this was promised, the wine and the "scrapings" effected a speedy restoration to health.

You may be interested, also, to recall that the Bishop of Verdun, in 1469, was involved in the conspiracy of the Duke of Burgundy, Cardinal Balue, and others, to replace Louis XI on the throne of France by his younger brother, Charles, Duke of Guyenne; and when Louis found this out, he put the Bishop of Verdun into an iron cage in the Bastille similar to the one wherein he put Balue at Loches. Verdun's bishop survived thirteen years of cage-existence in the Bastille, and was reinstated in his bishopric by Louis XI's none-too-filial son.

The Bastille is gone; but the dungeons at Loches and the cardinal's cage make us marvel at the hardy persistence of human nature which could thus defy death for years on end, and then come out and resume ordinary functioning in a stiff job like that of being Bishop of Verdun.

Just how stiff a job it was being Bishop of Verdun, I will not take space here to tell; for the strife of the bishops in their capacity of temporal rulers was much the same everywhere, and we have more of it in other chapters. The union of spiritual and temporal powers is "the very essence of despotism," as Rambaud says in his *History of French Civilization;* and the greatest intellectual and social progress has been attained in régimes where Church and State were not too closely associated.

Verdun was in such constant and such dreadful dis-

sensions, not only between her people and their bishops but between the bishops and the nobles, the bishops and the temporal powers over them, that in 1340 the Bishop of Verdun formed an alliance with the bishops of Metz and Toul, in the interest of keeping down disorder in their bishoprics—with the result that popular liberties, when three princes of the Church were arrayed against them, asserted themselves more militantly and more effectively than ever before.

But we shall have more of this later.

If you like, you may, when you stand on the heights at Verdun, picture the French army gathered to make the Second Crusade under Louis VII, encamped at Verdun on its way to Ratisbon to join forces with the Germans, under their Emperor, Conrad III. You may see their silken banners fluttering in the June breezes blowing across the Meuse; you may see the sunlight glittering on their burnished steel, and marvel at the zeal illumining their faces as they set them toward the east, toward Jerusalem.

And you may be interested to think of Vauban there, planning and directing the fortification of the place. Nature designed Verdun for a fortress, and the genius of that great military engineer (Vauban) supplemented nature in a degree that promised impregnability. Yet, time and again, Vauban's effort was unavailing, and it was not his engineering skill that emboldened any defenders of Verdun to cry: "They shall not pass!"

In June, 1791, there came along the broad old highways leading from Paris to Verdun, a coach bearing a royal family in flight from France. Through Meaux and Montmirail they came to Châlons, and then to St. Menehould, where Louis XVI incautiously thrust his head out of the carriage window and, disguised

though he was, was at once recognized by the post-master's son, who had been a guard at Versailles. He hastened ahead of them, this Drouet, reached Varennes before they did, and had given the alarm when they arrived at midnight, just twenty-four hours after leaving the Tuileries and only a few hours' journey from their border destination. Varennes is fifteen miles north-west of Verdun.

The return of the captured fugitives to Paris was much slower and took three days. Lafayette met them on the road, and intervened to save the little bodyguard from destruction by the populace.

I sometimes think that must have been the hardest thing Lafayette ever did for the democracy he so ardently believed in and gallantly fought for.

Defying the King's authority, in 1776, and escaping in disguise to come and help us fight for our independence, was one thing; Lafayette was nineteen then, orphaned, rich, aristocratic, married, romantic, and eager for noble adventure. It was a thrilling experience to be just about three leaps in advance of a *lettre de cachet* which would have consigned him for his disobedience to the Bastille, and to sneak out from a Spanish port and come sailing interminable seas to a strange land to unsheathe his sword for liberty.

That was gallant, but—to a youth of Lafayette's temperament—not difficult.

It was a different sort of courage he had need of when he was a man of thirty and the only noble in France who dared to sign a demand that the King convoke the States-General, or representative assembly of France. Lafayette doubtless knew how he would suffer for that. But it is comparatively easy to choose a course involving suffering for ourselves, and hard

indeed (especially for a man of Lafayette's compassionate nature) to persevere in a course which must bring great suffering to others. And this is what he had to do when he brought his long-time friends, the royal family of France, back from their flight and made them practical prisoners of Paris republicans.

For, in consideration of his services in the National Assembly and of his military record in America, Lafayette was chosen—on the day after the destruction of the Bastille—colonel-general of the new national guard of Paris. And in that capacity he became more or less the "keeper" of the royal family after they were compelled to leave Versailles and take up restricted residence in the Tuileries.

They may well have been grateful, though, to have him thus intrusted, and he was, doubtless, glad of the opportunity he had for saving them humiliation and harm.

But they essayed flight, and it became his duty to bring them back. Probably he knew, or at least feared, to what he was returning them. Marie Antoinette knew! It was at Varennes, in the night following their arrest there, that her "hair of warm, red gold turned white as new-fallen snow."

"Sire," said Lafayette to the King on that return to Paris, "your Majesty knows my attachment to you; but I have not concealed from you that if you separated your cause from that of the people, I should remain on the side of the people."

"That is true," the King replied. "You have acted on your principles. Until lately I believed that you surrounded me with people of your way of thinking, but who did not represent the mind of France. This journey has plainly shown me my mistake, and that such is the general mind."

So it was on his flight toward Verdun that Louis XVI learned what was the mind of France toward democracy.

And then, a little more than a year later, it was at Valmy, near Verdun, that Prussia learned what were the mind and spirit of France in that self-same struggle for democracy.

Late in August, 1792, an army of seventy thousand Prussians, under the Duke of Brunswick, came marching upon Verdun, boasting as they came that by the end of September they would be wining and dining in Paris.

On August 30th they arrived before Verdun and that night they opened bombardment. After fifteen hours, the town surrendered—although the commandant, Beaurepaire, unable to endure the shame of giving up the city he could not defend, blew his brains out in the council whereat surrender was voted.

But some of the townsfolk did not share his sense of humiliation; and among them was a group of hysterical women who dressed themselves in their best to receive the conquerors, and showered them with candy and kisses—the candy being the *dragées* or sugared almonds for which Verdun was even then celebrated.

The Duke of Brunswick was not able to conceal from these silly women how little he admired their behaviour.

Then came the defeat of the Prussians, Austrians, and Hessians at Valmy—and their retreat, without having given those dinners in Paris! And Verdun had the bitter experience of learning what France thought of her easy surrender. This was typically expressed in a piece successfully played in Paris theatres during the Revolution, wherein a cowardly and contemptible character bore the name of *M. Verdun.*

As for the hysterical women, they were taken to

Paris—fourteen of them—and arraigned before the Revolutionary Tribunal which condemned twelve of them to die on the scaffold. Two were girls of only seventeen, and their lives were spared; but they were obliged to witness the execution of the others, among whom one of the two girls had three sisters and the other saw her mother die.

Then came 1870—and more Prussians! Verdun was a small and antiquated fortress representing the defensive science of Vauban's day, more than two centuries before. It offered a gallant enough resistance for three weeks, then capitulated.

France might well have been dubious of the value of Verdun as a French town.

But France had lost Metz, her best defence against the peace-loving German people who were always swarming over the Rhine, armed to the teeth, in the hope of avoiding(!) war. So France must fortify Verdun, which is forty miles west of Metz, on the road to Paris.

Accordingly, in 1875 the little walled city became the centre of a great entrenched camp. And when the Prussians came again it was to storm a collection of sixteen large forts and about twenty smaller ones, defending a castrum thirty miles in circumference and nine miles in its greatest diameter.

The population of the town was about twelve thousand; and the eight thousand or more military who manned those forts in peace times were augmented by fighting men more numerous than any army ever gathered for the defence of a single point of attack.

Upon this group of forts and this little town the armies of the Crown Prince rained, for months and months, something like two hundred thousand shells

a day. There were many days on end when eight hundred shells struck the tiny city.

"We hold Verdun," the lying German war dispatches read.

But it was rather, as the French soldiers were quick to retort, Verdun that held the Germans. Month after dreadful month, the fighting strength of France had to withstand the most terrific onslaught in human history. There was nothing that the Teuton powers could do to take Verdun that was not thrown into the effort.

Perhaps the loss of Verdun would not have meant the triumph of Germany. It is inconceivable that France would not have found another barrier somewhere behind which to entrench herself and fight. No one who knows her spirit doubts that she would have done as Stephen Lauzanne predicted she would do if it were necessary: "When the men are all dead, the women will fight on; and when the women are all dead, the children will fight; and when the children are all gone, the dead will rise and continue the battle against the enemies of mankind."

But, though holding Verdun cost hundreds of thousands of lives, failure to hold it would have added vastly more to the total cost of Germany's assault upon our liberties.

So, Verdun stands forever as a symbol of supremely prepared militarism's defeat at the hands of free men fighting for the liberties of their children and of the world.

And the due of those who made of their bodies a living bulwark so that "They shall not pass," is that Verdun shall be, while time endures, one of the most sacred names in the annals of human courage.

VII

LAON

SOME chroniclers aver that Laon was founded six hundred and eighty years after the great flood. If they went a little further and claimed a little more, they might point to Laon as one of the likeliest places for persons to set up a community after Ararat.

In six hundred and eighty years, fear of another flood may have abated; but other reasons for hill-towns had increased. And it is practically certain that there have been people of some sort at the place now called Laon, for as long as there have been humans in France. No race would have overlooked the defensibility of that great plateau rising sheer on its natural escarpments of stone out of a vast encompassing plain.

You may imagine the prehistoric peoples there, and then the Gauls, and the Romans, and presently the Franks. You may like to recall that Attila besieged it in vain; and that it was Saint Remi, the patrician, born at Laon, who persuaded his townsmen to offer no resistance to Clovis—wherefore Clovis gratefully made Laon the capital of that diocese and of his government.

In the partition of Gaul after the death of Clovis, Laon fell to his youngest (and strongest) son, Clotair; and when Clotair, after having made himself master

of a realm far greater than that of his father, followed the custom of his people and divided it among his four sons, Laon was in the portion bequeathed to the third son, Sigebert, who married Brunhilda, daughter of the Visigothic King of Spain. Brunhilda was an able and interesting woman; and I wish I might take space here to tell a great deal about her in connection with Laon where she spent much time, in a castle at the foot of the mountain, and where she founded the abbey of St. Vincent. But as Laon is fuller of stories than an egg is full of meat, I can do no more than hint at most of them, and enlarge a little upon two or three.

It must suffice to say of Brunhilda, who ruled as regent first for her son and then for her grandsons for nearly forty years after her husband was assassinated by his brother's orders, that she not only put up a splendid fight to rescue France from the horrors attendant upon its ever-recurrent partitions among quarrelling and murdering heirs, but did many things to organize the chaotic conditions prevailing in place of government, and to forward the prosperity of the country. She saw the inadequacy of nearly everybody and everything in her adopted country, and with great courage tried to overcome the worst errors. But her reforms were not appreciated; and in her old age she was defeated in her struggles for her great-grandson, was captured, horribly tortured, and dragged to death at the tail of a horse. Often, as you travel in northeastern France and remark the condition of some ancient highway, you will be told by a native that it is one of Queen Brunhilda's roads. The Visigoths were more Roman than the Romans; and Brunhilda had a more than Roman sense of the value of roads as well as of a centralized government.

If Brunhilda had been able to prevail against the greedy nobles who had their own purely selfish reasons for divided kingdoms and quarrelling kings, many of the events which characterized Laon two and three and four and five centuries after her shocking death, would not have happened.

But Brunhilda was not able to make the nobles of her realm prize the security of the country above their own opportunities for power and enrichment; and the further course of her husband's race was short and almost wholly ignominious. There was one (Dagobert) who made a valiant effort to be a real king; but the others were merest puppets whilst they were gradually eliminated by the rulers of their own households, all-powerful functionaries known as mayors of the palace, who had so much patronage to dispense that they were monarchs in effect for a full century before they felt it advisable to take the name.

Thus came the race of Charlemagne upon the throne. And thus, in turn, it was replaced. Laon was the last corner of all the vast empire of Charlemagne that remained to his descendants a century after his death; and it was at Laon that one after another of the things happened which typify for us the second breaking up of royal power in France under that tyranny of the nobles which was now taking a definite form, becoming an organized régime which we know as feudalism.

For more than a hundred years the crown was passed back and forth between descendants of Charlemagne and scions of the house of Capet, who were counts of Paris and dukes of France. The former made Laon their capital; when they were in power it was the capital of the realm; when the Capetians were in power, Paris was the capital. The great vassals

crowned and decrowned kings at will. They needed, for their purposes, a semblance of unity as furnished by a king; but they wanted powerless kings, so they stood for an elected king, and elected the one they thought they could govern most satisfactorily. They were careful, however, not to go far afield; for there were some in France who remembered that the Pope, at Saint Denis, had warned the Frankish people of the anathema which would fall upon them if they elected a king not of Pepin's race, and among those who feared the anathema or had reason to keep others fearfully in mind of it were the bishops. The church was the direct heir of the Roman form of government, and all its concepts of decency and dignity were shocked by the bandying about of a crown. A king, in their eyes, was the Lord's anointed, and no profane hands could snatch his consecration from him.

So the great vassals were not without some restraint. But there came ravaging down through France hordes of Northmen or Norsemen or Normans, burning and sacking and killing; and Charles the Fat, great grandson of Charles the Great (Charlemagne) did nothing to defend his people against them.

They were unable to take Laon, but they sacked the abbeys at the base of the plateau; and on they went to Paris, where the Count showed himself a stout defender.

This led to the deposition of the Lord's anointed (fat, wheezy, and inadequate) and the election of the Count of Paris to the throne of France.

But he who had made a good count made a poor king; and after he was killed in the civil war brought on by his election, the crown reverted to another Charles, rightful heir to the crown taken from Charles the Fat.

This was Charles the Simple, proclaimed king at Laon in 893 and deposed nearly thirty years later, when Laon was taken from him by another Count of Paris and he himself fell into the hands of Count Herbert of Vermandois and died of starvation in the donjon at Péronne, while Herbert became Count of Laon.

The significant thing about this second triumph of the Counts of Paris was that the one who overthrew the Simple (he was a nephew of the Count who succeeded Charles the Fat) didn't care enough about the crown to accept it—the crown of France mattered so little to a man who was Duke of France, suzerain over that great central area stretching from Bourges to Amiens, and Count of Paris. He suggested his brother-in-law for King of France—and King of France he was, for more than a dozen years. Then the Count of Paris, Hugh—whom history calls Hugh the Great—just to show that he was master of the realm whether the puppet on the throne were his brother-in-law or one of Charlemagne's own heirs, brought the son of Charles the Simple back from England where he had taken refuge, and had him elected King of France, and crowned at Laon on June 19, 936. Louis from Overseas, they called him; he was Louis IV of France (his grandfather Louis the Stammerer, was Louis II; and his uncle was Louis III. Louis I was Charlemagne's son, grandfather of the second Louis.)

Whilst Charles the Simple was languishing at Péronne, his captor, Vermandois, and Raoul whom his brother-in-law had made the nominal King of France, squabbled about Laon. Raoul ceded it to Herbert, who built a castle there and prepared to make it the capital of his vast domain. Then Raoul came and took it back

again in a sort of half-victory which left Herbert in possession of his castle.

Naturally, when Louis IV was crowned there and Laon became his capital, his first thought was to "oust" the vassal who had starved his father to death. His mother undertook to do this while Louis was in Flanders. She failed. Herbert not only kept his castle, but he took the town—the king's capital. Louis, when he heard this, went hurrying to the rescue, retook his capital and with it Herbert's castle.

Then Hugh the Great, misliking this show of power in a puppet he had set up to dance as he pulled the strings, helped Herbert to get Laon back again. The first assault they made was repulsed by Louis, and similarly the second; but they at last succeeded and Louis was made prisoner. The price of his ransom, set by Hugh, was the county of Laon. Louis paid it.

"I had only that fortress," he said, explaining his action; "it was the sole castle whither I could take myself for refuge and my wife and children for safety. But what could I do? I preferred my life to my castle, and I paid with Laon for my liberty."

Louis was rather an up-and-coming person, and might have done a good deal to put his dynasty on a better basis if he had not had to struggle against odds which would have been too much even for a stronger man.

One of these was the shame and treachery of his mother who, after all that her husband and son had suffered at the hands of Herbert of Vermandois, became enamoured of Herbert's fifth son and aided him and his father to despoil her own son of his last stronghold.

Another thing which was a great blow to Louis was the loss of Normandy from his vassalage. His father,

unable to oppose the terrible Normans, had taken another course: he had bought them off with a great grant of land and made their leader Duke of Normandy and a vassal of the French Crown.

But the new Norman duke (son of Rollo, the first duke) was contemptuous of the seed of Charlemagne, and transferred his allegiance to Hugh the Great, the kingmaker.

In spite of all this, however, Louis maintained a dignity which is to me very touching. He "haunts" Laon, for me, as Brunhilda does, and as another does whom I shall mention towards this chapter's end.

He finally got back Laon, I'm glad to say, but did not live long—I can't say "to enjoy it," for the idea of poor Louis enjoying the capital where he had known so much private and public humiliation and sorrow is untenable; shall we say, instead, that he did not live long to be bothered with it?

And after eighteen years of nominal kingship, he left Hugh the Great more completely in control of the situation than he had been when he had Louis made king. Even then, Hugh believed that he served his own purpose better if he remained the power behind the throne; and he secured the election (!) of Louis's son to the Crown of France.

This son, Lothair, reigned thirty-two years without doing anything effective for his country, his people, or his race. But he, too, had the sort of things to contend against which his father had, only some of the private sorrows came even closer. His queen, Emma, had a scandalous liaison with the Bishop of Laon, Adalbéron, who seems to have been implicated with Emma in Lothair's death by poison.

Hugh the Great was long since dead, and succeeded

by his son Hugh, whom we call Hugh Capet. So in accord with his father's policies was Hugh that he "arranged" the election of Lothair's young son as Louis V. This young man "reigned" only a year. He chased his mother and her mitred paramour out of Laon, but he had not cleared the royal household of shame; for his wife, Blanche, is accused of having caused his death—also by poison.

Then Hugh Capet decided that there had been enough of such pretence; and it was Adalbéron who helped Hugh take prisoner the last of Charlemagne's heirs: Charles, brother of Lothair and uncle of the young king just dead. Partly this action of Adalbéron's was because Charles had told young Louis the shameful truth and brought about that expulsion of Emma and himself from Laon; and partly it was because the Church had a state policy opposed to Charles, Duke of Lorraine, becoming King of France.

I won't enter into the details of that policy, here; because they belong more properly in other chapters, on Lorraine.

But Charles marched upon Laon, took it without siege or battle, and imprisoned Emma and her bishop who had been permitted to return there. Hugh hurried to the rescue and made a desperate but vain attempt to regain the royal city. Charles not only resisted him, but made a sortie and drove away Hugh's army in great disorder. Hugh returned with a new army; but it was not armed force that despoiled the last of Charlemagne's heirs of his royal refuge; it was Adalbéron, who induced a warder to open one of the city gates and let Hugh's army in. This was in the night of Holy Thursday, April 12, 991. Charles woke to find himself a prisoner and his cause lost. And

Hugh Capet made the Bishop of Laon the second ecclesiastic in the realm, with only the Archbishop of Reims above him.

Charlemagne had died in 814. His empire was partitioned in 843. In 887 the powerful vassals of France began bestowing the crown of France as they chose. And for a hundred years thereafter the kings of France danced pretty much as their great vassals piped. Then came a new order—or, rather, certain changes which, if they did not seem to work much difference at first, brought with them the seeds of that which was to fructify in a new order, though not until after many generations had come and gone.

Feudalism, the rule of the suzerains or great seigneurs of vast territories, did not begin to decline for more than two hundred years after Hugh Capet got himself elected head of that agglomeration of duchies, counties, and what-not which had not yet begun to think of itself as a nation and did not begin to resemble a nation until great events, sweeping those pioneers into a common current, gave them a sense of unity and drove them to do many things to preserve that unity and to extend its power.

At first, before those outside forces came into play (chief among them the Crusades, of course), there were two influences which tended to hold the realm together in some semblance of unity, under some semblance of a king. One of these was the Church and the other was the people. Both had good reasons for their desire.

Now Laon was only one of the many, many towns in France where this phase of France's history was stirringly enacted; but it epitomizes what was happening at about the same time in nearly every city we are

concerned with in this book. With few exceptions they are cathedral cities; many of them were ruled by bishops with seignorial as well as spiritual powers. Usually the bishops and the people quarrelled violently and bloodthirstily; but all the while they were, although quite unconsciously, working out in their very quarrels something tremendously important to France and, consequently, to all of us.

Before we launch into those events at Laon, let us remind ourselves what sorts of "people" there were in and about Laon, and elsewhere in northern France, about the time Charlemagne's race was disappearing from the scene and the hardy Capets were "cinching" the crown of France so well that their house wore it for eight centuries; and what was the power of the clergy.

In the chapter on Péronne we described the four classes of nobles from the most puissant seigneurs down to the poorest squires between whom and "the people" a great chasm yawned.

Besides them, there were the clergy, subdivided into many classes of their own; and the "people."

The grand seigneurs of the Church were the bishops and the abbots. Both were landed proprietors, usually on a large scale. In general, the bishop's holdings (that is to say, those he held for the bishopric of which he was the temporal and spiritual head) were town properties, more or less associated with the cathedral, though he often had other parcels of land scattered far and wide, whereas the abbot, or abbé, was frequently a county seigneur whose domain was by no means confined to the abbey precincts but made up of lands not only all over the realm but all over the known world.

In the feudal régime the abbeys were more popular

than the secular churches and the cathedrals. The cloistered life made many appeals to people's imagination and to their needs. Men who had repugnance for military life took the frock which gave them immunity from service, and endowed the abbey with their worldly goods. These men formed large communities to beg for their abbey, to pray for the souls of its benefactors, and so on. Even a serf, a runaway slave, could attach himself to an abbey community if he could get there without being retaken. Once there and his declaration of desire to stay there made to the monks, it would be a rash owner indeed who dared to claim him away from the service of God—or of the abbey.

Theoretically, bishops and abbés were elected to their high offices. Bishops were supposed to be the choice of clergy, nobles, and the people. As a matter of fact, the people were not consulted at all, the clergy were represented only by the canons, forming the chapter of the cathedral, and the canons were recruited from younger sons of noble houses. So the nobles alone chose the bishops, although the king had a right called the right of confirmation which he not infrequently used as a veto. A bishop could be consecrated only by the king; and, naturally, the king would not consecrate to such powers as bishops had, any but those he thought would serve his interests. So the bishops and the kings were interdependent in a degree which was about to make some tremendous history.

Abbés also were elected—after a fashion which nearly always secured the office for a scion of nobility. In general, however, the monks were more directly under the Pope, the head of the Church, than under the king, the head of the country. The great "orders"

had abbeys everywhere in Christendom and organizations which related very little to local or national feeling and almost wholly to the "church universal."

Whereas "king and country" were served by the bishops even when the bishops were least conscious of any such service, least desirous of rendering it.

Out of this distinction between bishops and the abbés of the enormously rich "orders" grew so much in European history, in democracy, and in national spirit, that unless we have it rather clearly in mind we shall miss a major part of all that these old towns have to tell us.

Now for those "people" against whom and yet with whom the bishops wrought:

They were of two classes—bond and free; and rather less separated them than separated the two similar classes of nearly a thousand years before. The serf of feudal times was recognized as a man, whereas the slave of Roman times was not; his children could inherit certain things from him although he himself was in theory the owner of nothing and held what little he had in trust from his master; he could escape from a harsh lord by taking refuge in an abbey or other church property, or he could become a free man if he could succeed in absenting himself for a year and a day without being overtaken and forced to return. (But "freedom" meant only the chance to attach himself to another overlord; for no man could be his own master.)

The men called free were little better off than the serfs, and less well-off than the free peasants of Roman times. They were not (as their class had once been) citizens. They were bound to the earth, as the Roman *colons* also were, and they did not own it; but that proportion of the fruits of their labour which they were

obliged to render up to the owner of the soil was fixed —usually by custom or common law—and the remainder was theirs.

Neither class had any law over them except that of their seigneurs who kept them constantly reminded of it by erecting pillories, whipping-posts, and gibbets at the gates of their castles. It was to the interest of the seigneurs, however, not to kill off their servitors, nor even to keep them idle in pillories. The lords preferred fines, which enriched their always-yawning treasuries. When a conscienceless noble could think of no other way of wringing money or its equivalent from a servitor, he could accuse him of some wrongdoing and fine him for that—and there was nothing for the accused to do but pay.

In addition to what he had to give his seigneur in exchange for the right to work a parcel of that seigneur's land, the "free" man (called a *franc* or *vilain*) paid a fixed sum like a rental, and a long list of other things. Each time a new seigneur took possession, by inheritance or sale or gift, he collected a "charge" from every *franc*—just as he in turn paid to his every new suzerain. If a *franc* married a woman from another estate he had not only to get her seigneur's permission, but he had to pay for it—on the principal that he was depriving that seigneur of the labour of her hands.

The *franc* was further obligated (among many other things) to contribute toward his seigneur's ransom (if he were taken captive); to help equip him for a crusade; to "chip in" when the seigneur's eldest daughter was married and when his eldest son became a knight; to work on fortifications; to do sentinel duty at the castle; to obey when requisitions of horses, forage, food were made of him in time of war; to lodge

and feed the seigneur or any of his soldiers when they were on the march; and so on.

The seigneurs created markets and fairs; and charged their *francs* for the use of them. They charged toll for using the roads and bridges, toll for passing through the gates of fortified towns, rents for the use of weights and measures, license fees for permission to open shops and sell merchandise.

Each proprietor set up on his land whatever industries besides agriculture were necessary to the maintenance of his estate. At first these were kept going by the enforced work of slaves. But latterly, if a free man were attached to the parcel of ground on which was located a mill or a forge or a wine-press, he had to work at the industry which gave the character to the land whereon he belonged.

For the land alone had character, standing; and the men on it took their quality therefrom.

These were the conditions under which men lived when there began to stir in Northern France one of the most interesting demonstrations of democracy the world has ever seen.

How those "people" gathered power to demand charters, set up communes, oppose nobles and clergy and (when need was) king, is one of the stories out of the past which make the soil of France so sacred to all the children of enlightened liberty.

But they did not jump into that power. Certain tremendous influences cleared the way for them to climb, as if the besom of God were sweeping their path and the breath of God were blowing them on.

One of these was the Norman Conquest of England wherein a motley assortment of men had come into the possession of rich and beautiful estates awarded

by William to the warriors who had helped him take such vast spoils.

This gave everybody, but particularly every man in northern France, the fever to exchange his circumscribed condition for one of wealth and power through conquest.

As much as motives of religion, this made the Crusades possible; this and the founding of Portugal by French adventurers under a son of the Duke of Burgundy, and the setting-up of a Norman kingdom in the Two-Sicilies.

The First Crusade, which established kings from northern France on the thrones of Jerusalem and Antioch, ended with the closing days of the eleventh century. Immeasurably greater in effect than its little temporary sovereignties in the East, was its influence in breaking up the isolation of life in France and giving French people for the first time a feeling of pride in being French, a feeling of fellowship with other men of their own race.

Moreover, from even that first contact with the older civilization of the Saracens, came a broadening of ideas so great that we, I think, can scarcely comprehend it. Life expanded so much, and so rapidly, that it is a wonder it didn't *burst.*

And another thing happened that was a tremendous help to democracy though its sole intent was to extend the powers of an autocracy; Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) decreed first that only cardinals should have a voice in the election of a Pope and that only the Pope should have the power to invest bishops or abbés, from whom, of course, cardinals are made.

There were, unquestionably, reasons why the sovereignty of the Church should cease being bestowed at

royal will upon children of twelve years (such as one of Hildebrand's immediate predecessors had been) and other totally unfit persons, and should be determined by vote of the Church's highest clergy. But also, as bishops and abbés were vassals of the various crowns and held vast properties thereof, it was not only a church but a state matter that sought to apportion those properties and their powers from Rome without consulting the wishes of the kings, who might (and did) have thrust upon them vassals alien to them in every purpose.

It was in the universal row these decrees precipitated that Hildebrand excommunicated the Emperor of Germany (Henry IV) for continuing to invest bishops and forced Henry, when the latter was unable to live under the terrible ban, to stand barefooted in the snow for three days and three nights, wearing only his penitent's "shift," before admitting him to sue for reinstatement.

News of this, travelling everywhere, gave the Papacy an enormous ascendency, in the popular mind, over emperors and kings. It was to further this, to draw multitudes of men directly under the command of the Church and to build up the temporal power of the Church's sovereign pontiff, that Hildebrand's successor preached the First Crusade and promised rich kingdoms in the Holy Land to those who should help to recover it from the infidel.

The results of the Crusades were almost diametrically opposed to all that the Church had hoped for. Instead of making the Papacy an imperial power, they brought about a state of society in which every class from pope to peasant became more than ever bent upon the strengthening of its own position, and to

that end sought new coalitions among the other classes.

Sometimes one class combined with another to further some plan of one or of both. Again there were combinations made solely to check the plans of a power that was getting too strong. Each of the ruling classes became rather suddenly aware of "the people"; but the nobles were so arrogant in their enormous power that they conciliated nobody and especially disdained the mass of humanity over which their sway was so absolute.

But the kings and the bishops played the people against one another. And the curious result was that everybody won!

During the First Crusade, temporal subjects of the Church in sundry cathedral cities of northern France began to demand enfranchisement and a degree of self-government. Cambrai was one of the first, then Amiens.

In 1108 the Bishop of Noyon called together an assembly of all his townsfolk—clergy, knights, tradesmen, artisans, all freemen—and presented to them a charter of perpetual rights and liberties as citizens of the commune of Noyon; and he himself was the first to take the oath of loyalty to the charter.

News of this was not long in reaching Laon, nor any other town in France.

But Laon's Bishop just then was little likely to enfranchise his people. He was a priest from Soissons who, having come somehow or other into the possession of much money, bought his election to the episcopal throne of Laon, where his inordinate passion for carnal pleasures and his brutal impatience of all opposition made him most odious to his subjects. (Here

was an argument for Hildebrand's reform—supposing that the sovereign pontiff would have been proof against this lewd priest's money.)

And when Bishop Gaudry ordered a prominent citizen of Laon murdered in the cathedral, public fury against him rose and threw the town into a state of shocking anarchy from which Gaudry prudently betook himself to distant safety.

While he was gone, his people declared themselves a commune like Noyon, and presented a charter to the King for confirmation.

This King was Louis VI, who has been called "the father of communes"; but I am afraid that Louis cannot be presumed therefore to have had an ardent love of popular liberties. What he did have was a desire (and a need!) to do anything he could to reduce the power of his great vassals, and the communes were one way thereto. Also, he had need of large sums of money to prosecute his incessant wars; and the communes paid well for their charters.

So he confirmed the charter of Laon.

Then, during Holy Week of 1112, while he was visiting Laon, the Bishop and his party induced Louis to revoke the charter. Louis was always a strong ally of the Church, partly for policy, and partly because he had suffered in his youth through his father's excommunication and had no wish to bring himself into like disfavour.

The townsfolk offered him all they could muster, to let their charter stand. But the Bishop and his supporters offered more. So Louis revoked the charter on Holy Thursday, and left town hurriedly at an early hour on Good Friday morning. And Gaudry had the audacity to order that the defrauded populace should

be specially taxed to pay the King for revoking their charter.

Frightful disorder ensued. The city swam in blood, as an old chronicler puts it, and some of it was the Bishop's; for he was killed by a hatchet stroke on his head. Dreadful destruction spread beyond all intent or control, and ten churches, the Bishop's palace, and whole groups of houses were consumed, and the cathedral was gutted by fire.

The individual who was most potent in bringing Laon out of all this disorder was the saintly and scholarly Anselm, head of the cathedral school of Laon, where multitudes of men came to sit at his feet. "The most eminent personages and the best writers of the century had been his disciples"; and of him it was said that "he made bishops but refused to be one."

It was through his efforts, largely, that the cathedral was so speedily and so splendidly rebuilt. And it seems that in the zeal he aroused for that gigantic enterprise he was able to hold together in a very fair semblance of amity, if not unity, the cathedral chapter and other ecclesiastical dignitaries and the people deprived of their brief liberties.

On September 5, 1114, the restored cathedral was solemnly rededicated. And there it stood, dominant in beauty, in grandeur, as well as in situation, splendidly uplifted above all the surrounding country, for just exactly eight hundred years before it passed into the night of shame under German occupation from which it was freed only in the closing days of the late war.

The fame and success of Anselm's teaching caused other schools to be established at Laon and to share the prosperity and renown of the older school. One

of these amassed, long before the introduction of printing, a library of eleven thousand volumes.

In 1128 King Louis re-established the commune of Laon. And the charter under which the city resumed its civic liberties was so excellent that it served as a model for the revised communal charters of Reims, Amiens, Beauvais, and Montdidier. It has come down to us, and we know exactly what its provisions and prohibitions were. Under it, the city had a mayor and aldermen, elected by the citizens. All enforced personal servitude, or slavery, was abolished. Every man admitted to the commune had to build a house in Laon, or buy a vineyard, or install himself with possessions against which judgment could be levied in case of any default. The charter forbade the nobles to take any action against the commonest citizens except according to due process of law, under the mayor and other city officials. It established liberty of marriage, and protected the rights of the individual in many ways. But in the administration of justice it admitted the judicial combat, proofs by fire and water, punishment by retaliation, and many other things much opposed to the ideals of justice now prevailing.

As if by way of thank-offering for their restored privileges the townsfolk did excellent service for Louis in 1130 when their militia supplemented the army he led thither to deal with that "most lost man," Thomas de Marle, son of the sire of Coucy. Thomas was a brigand of the first order, who did not hesitate even at robbing merchants who ventured to cross his territory armed with a safe-conduct from the King. His castle was regarded as impregnable and Thomas himself as irrepressible. Nevertheless, the Laon militia and the King's soldiers essayed to rid the countryside

of Thomas de Marle's lawlessness. Thomas made a sortie from his castle, was mortally wounded by the besiegers, and dragged back to Laon in a triumphal procession of the King, who entered the ancient capital much as a Roman Emperor might have done, with his captured foe in chains.

That picture is a significant one to recall at Laon: big, burly Louis, mighty swordsman, joyous fighter who in his younger years had been named "the Bruiser," riding into Laon where so many feeble kings had danced to the piping of their great vassals, and taking thither, to die the next day, the most powerful and most troublesome of the vassals who defied him.

At last kings were making themselves a power to reckon with, in France!

The new Bishop of Laon, however, was no better friend of communes and popular liberties than Gaudry had been. Nor were others who came after him; and finally one of them "made himself so agreeable" at the court of Louis VII in the feeble old age of that monarch, that he succeeded in getting the Laon commune abolished, fifty years after its restoration, and the people delivered over again to his absolute rule.

This sort of thing—restoration and revocation—went on for nearly a hundred and fifty years more, when the commune of Laon ceased to exist about the time that the whole communal movement gave up the struggle against the autocracy of the crown.

During those years, however, Laon's great schools gave three popes to the world, twelve cardinals, two patriarchs, eight archbishops, thirty-four bishops, and six chancellors of France.

And it was (rather curiously!) a Bishop of Laon—Robert Lecocq—who was second to Étienne Marcel

in leading the popular uprising of Paris against the Dauphin-regent in 1358, while France's king was in captivity in England. But Bishop Robert was in nowise actuated by a love of popular rights such as his predecessors had fought to suppress; he was merely using a dissatisfaction which looked to him to be a good aid to the dislodgement of the reigning Valois and the substitution of Charles the Bad of Navarre. This latter had indeed a most considerable claim to the throne of the Capets, which would have been his except for the denial of his mother's rights because of her sex. But neither was it loyalty to the direct line of Hugh Capet that animated Bishop Robert of Laon when he attempted to deliver his episcopal city to a descendant of Hugh as, long before, Adalbéron had delivered it to Hugh himself. Robert seems to have had "expectations" of Charles the Bad and of the English with whom Charles was in alliance; but his plot was uncovered, he was obliged to flee beyond the Pyrenees, and six of his accomplices at Laon perished on the scaffold.

John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, took Laon in 1411, and in 1419 the Burgundians sold it to the English, recently victorious at Agincourt and rapidly becoming masters of France. Then, after ten years of English occupation, Jeanne d'Arc came; and under the impetus she gave to French national spirit, the people of Laon drove out the English garrison, and Charles VII made his entry into the city.

Many things happened at Laon between the English evacuation, in 1429, and the English victory at Waterloo nearly four centuries later; but if I even start to make mention among them, here and there, I shall never know how to leave off. Most, if not all, of them

however belong to phases of French history wherewith we deal in others of these chapters.

In February, 1814, Prince Lapoukin, at the head of a regiment of Cossacks, surrounded Laon and demanded its surrender to the Allies. The city was in no condition to refuse. It had only four cannon and a few muskets; its walls were breached in many places; there was no organization for defence. Why Napoleon permitted so important a stronghold to fall into such a state is a mystery. But, loyal as it was to the Emperor, there was nothing to do but submit to those seeking his destruction.

Lapoukin made the people of Laon many promises contingent on their peaceable submission. He broke them all. He made Laon, at its junction of four great military roads, an allied camp bristling with menace toward Paris.

Throughout all the campaign of that memorable year, Laon was in the hands of France's invaders, and her people were—like those of recent days—cut off from all knowledge of what was going on in their country and how the tide of conflict flowed.

Suddenly [as a local historian wrote soon after those events] a terrible bombardment from the neighbouring heights woke at once the fears and the hopes of the city; it was Napoleon, who with fewer than 29,000 men was hurling himself against the forces of Blücher, containing more than 100,000 fighters. The deplorable results of that battle are known: the Emperor, discouraged, retreated, fighting as he went. The enemy, surer than ever of victory, treated him without a particle of pity. And that enemy's insolent soldiers pillaged the houses in Laon, and sacked, burned, demolished the suburbs.

June 12, 1815, Napoleon was in Laon—where then was

gathered one of the ten army corps of France—on his way to Waterloo.

On the 20th, toward six o'clock in the morning, the flotsam of that wreck came floating back on the road from Chambry. A little later Napoleon appeared. He descended from his travelling carriage, in the principal street; and someone, seeing him, cried out: "Your soldiers are saving themselves!" It was regrettable that he left Laon, in spite of the counsel of Marshal Soult, who believed that from there he could reorganize the army.

How excellent was the basis for that belief I am far from being able to judge. And with due recognition of all that Napoleon accomplished for Europe, it is not possible to lament the collapse of his far-flung empire. Nevertheless, one poignantly regrets his sufferings, and suffers with him—not because his plans were defeated, but because he was. And I vividly remember how, as I came down from Laon's hillcrest into the great plain, late on a golden afternoon in midsummer, 1914, I seemed to be making the descent with a pale, weary little man who knew that he had said a long farewell to all his greatness.

The carriage in which he rode is at Madame Tussaud's in London—I have been familiar with it since my early childhood—and in it, beside him, rather than in the big French limousine of a hundred years later, I seemed to take the road to Paris; with him I fancied myself looking back at the city the sun was gilding, the city where Charlemagne's heirs had clung to the last remnant of his all-embracing empire.

France's great modern empire had, in dissolution, its association with Laon, too—and likewise its successor: an engineer of the troops defending Laon in

1870 blew up the powder magazine as the Germans were entering the city, sacrificing his own life and many others, and damaging the cathedral, in a supreme effort against the perpetual enemies of his race.

VIII

PÉRONNE

TWICE in its history Péronne held a king of France imprisoned by one of his great vassals. That is the outstanding fact about it for all students of the past and all readers of romance.

Those fortunate persons over whose youth Sir Walter Scott cast his wizardry will easily recall his descriptions of Péronne in *Quentin Durward.*

> Péronne [he says], situated upon a deep river (the Somme) in a flat country, and surrounded by strong bulwarks, was accounted in ancient, as in modern times, one of the strongest fortresses in France. Indeed, though lying on an exposed and warlike frontier, it was never taken by an enemy, but preserved the proud name of Péronne la Pucelle (the Virgin), until the Duke of Wellington took the place in his memorable march upon Paris in 1815.

Scott's descriptions of the meeting at Péronne between Louis XI of France and his great vassal, Duke Charles the Bold of Burgundy, have in them very little fiction, but are drawn with great detail from the memoirs of Philippe des Commines, who was present as a close confidant of Charles—and afterwards transferred his allegiance to Louis.

After a banquet in the Hôtel de Ville, at which Charles displayed much of his magnificence (than

which Europe had never seen greater since the early Roman emperors), Louis asked to be lodged in the citadel, or castle, rather than in the town. Too many of Charles's great lords were present with him to permit of Louis's feeling quite safe in this Burgundian town that he hoped to buy back for France from which it had just recently passed.

Charles permitted his sovereign to lodge in the castle, but would not permit Louis's guard of Scottish archers to accompany him—they must stay in the gate house.

The king was left [Scott says] with only one or two personal followers, under the archway of the base-court of the castle, looking on the high tower which occupied one of the angles, being in fact the donjon or principal keep of the palace.

The great keep was in form nearly resembling the White Tower in the Citadel of London, but still more ancient in architecture, deriving its date, as was affirmed, from the days of Charlemagne.

The walls were of a tremendous thickness, the windows very small and grated with bars of iron, and the high, clumsy bulk of the building cast a dark and portentous shadow over the whole of the courtyard.

"I am not to be lodged there," the king said with a shudder that had in it something ominous.

"No," replied the grey-headed seneschal who attended upon him. "God forbid! Your majesty's apartments are prepared in these lower buildings, in which King John slept two nights before the battle of Poitiers."

"Hum—that is no lucky omen, either!" muttered the king; "but what of the tower? And why should you desire of Heaven that I may not be there lodged?"

"I know no evil of the tower at all," the seneschal replied; "only that the sentinels say lights are seen, and

strange noises heard in it at night; and there are reasons why that may be the case; for anciently it was used as a state prison, and there are many tales of deeds which have been done in it."

Many indeed! No one knows just how many. Some authorities think the tower belonged to a castle built by the Romans. Others believe it to have been no older than the era of Clovis or his immediate successors.

In the times when it begins to have an especial interest for us, it was part of the possessions of the counts of Vermandois, who were vassals of the dukes of France.

To understand what was in the mind of Louis XI when he looked at the donjon of Péronne castle and shuddered, we have to go back a long way and outline a good deal of history. But it is history without which no one can do worth-while journeying in France. And Péronne peculiarly epitomizes it, as I have said. We all "studied" it in school, and not one of us (probably) comprehended it in the smallest degree. I know I didn't for many years during which I read more French history and visited more parts of France than any but a very, very few persons have time, inclination, and opportunity to do. Even with all this, my concept of the feudal system was very hazy until I made an intensive study of it. My experience of discussing it even with well-informed persons is that their understanding of this state of society is confessedly vague. So I am offering here what would have been of inestimable aid to me in my earlier journeyings about France. Those to whom it is "as A B C" will scarcely trouble themselves with any part of my simple annals and cannot, therefore, be affronted at my effort to make

plain many things whereof our comprehension is too often (to my mind) taken for granted.

The excessive taxation of Rome reacted in feudalism. When the Franks came into power they realized that the Gauls would not support them if taxes were not very greatly reduced. This was no serious hardship to Clovis and his immediate successors; for in their own tribal organization the chiefs had been no expense to their people, who sometimes presented them with a freewill offering but in the main expected them to live on the booty of war.

Later, when the descendants of those tribal chieftains needed money to maintain their state and money to pay men for making war, they found it decidedly difficult to get—so difficult that one way for a king to rid himself of a subject was to appoint the latter a tax-collector; the people did the rest.

The king's wealth was in lands, properties. These they at first "loaned" to their strong men for a term of years or for life, in return for services. Then, the heirs of such tenants promised the same services to the heirs of the kings, in consideration of continued tenure. And as the kings' heirs always needed the services, the bargains were renewed and renewed until finally there was no dispossessing these holders of the land.

Sometimes they kept their bargains with the kings; and sometimes they didn't. As the kings had less and less land to bestow and got poorer and poorer, it became easier and easier to defy them.

That is, reduced to the simplest essence, the reason why the power of the kings dwindled in France, and the power of the landed proprietors, the great nobles, increased to such an extent that they tolerated a king or defied him at will.

The France over which Charlemagne's descendants ruled (more or less) was really not a kingdom so much as a federation of states, each with its own laws, its own language (or dialect), and its own customs. Much of what is now France was then independent, under kings of other races—like Brittany and Arles. And the remainder was constituted by "a dozen distinct Frances" in reality if not in effect.

There were the great counties of Flanders, Anjou, Champagne, and Toulouse; the duchies of Normandy, Burgundy, and Aquitaine; and so on—each made up of a great number of seigneuries or estates.

The great factors of France were the counts or dukes of these principal states or provinces. They held dominion over their vast territories by a contract originally very simple but latterly very complicated. They were vassals of the king, and they swore "homage" to him—that is, each avowed himself the sovereign's "man" (*homme*), ready at all times to defend the person and the rights of the sovereign against his enemies or to go to war with the sovereign seeking to extend his rights.

And, in order to insure their ability to fulfil this contract, these chief vassals repeated the process; they parcelled out larger and smaller estates to seigneurs who took the same oath of homage to them.

It was a predatory era. Every man was as safe as he could make himself by "relating" himself in homage to a puissant overlord. The terms of these contracts were not written, and they varied with different provinces. But like other unwritten laws they were rather more binding than those on statute books. And in general they entailed these features: Military service of the vassal with so-many men, all equipped

and maintained without expense to the sovereign or suzerain; participation in the councils and judicial sittings of the suzerain (or overlord); monetary gifts to the suzerain for his ransom if he were taken prisoner, and on the occasion of the marriage of his eldest daughter and the "setting up" in knighthood of his eldest son; latterly, vassals gave also to equip their suzerains when they went on a crusade.

In return for these obligations, the suzerain engaged to "counsel" his vassal in the vassal's perplexities, to aid him if he went to war, to give him protection of his rights and fair trial before a jury of his peers, to become the guardian (in event of the vassal's death) of his widow and children, and not to seek to retake the vassal's holding, or fief.

It was a contract in the best sense of the word and subject to cancellation if either party to it fell short of keeping his obligations. So it not infrequently happened that a vassal took advantage of some such opportunity to carry his allegiance elsewhere, to a suzerain more powerful or more just (maintaining, the while, his selfsame holding, probably in the midst of his erstwhile suzerain's territory), or the suzerain declared a fief forfeited and gave it to another. And, of course, vassals, with their rights of private war, were continually taking and retaking one another's properties which, in consequence, were continually complicating the allegiances of their lords.

When a vassal died leaving an infant heir, the suzerain had the right to demand that the fief have a guardian capable of fulfilling all the obligations of war, council, etc. Frequently the suzerain himself assumed the guardianship. If a married daughter inherited a property, her husband incurred her obligations. If an

unmarried daughter was the heiress, the suzerain had the right to demand that she marry and provide him with a warrior, and he either selected a husband for her or named to her several from whom she had to make her choice. (What romancers would have done without this latter state of affairs is difficult to imagine!)

Under each great suzerain, like the Duke of Burgundy or the Count of Champagne or the Duke of France, there were usually three classes of sub-holders. Let us take Péronne for an example. Péronne belonged to the Duchy of France which, after Hugh Capet, Duke of France, became Hugh Capet, King of France, was known as the royal domain. Paris was its principal city, and it was composed of many "counties" or counts' holdings—such as those of Chartres, Sens, Blois, Dreux, Senlis, Vermandois, etc.; some smaller properties of mere "sires"; the bishoprics of Laon, Noyon, and Beauvais; the abbey of Saint-Denis, near Paris; and many, many other fiefs, lay and ecclesiastic. All these vassals owed homage to the Duke of France, who, in turn, owed it to the King of France, but the unwritten terms of their fealty seem to have been lighter than elsewhere, and each seigneur to have been quite independent.

The Count of Vermandois, to whom Péronne belonged, was a very powerful noble, descended in direct male line from Charlemagne. Under him there were many knights who enjoyed parcels of his domain (a small town, a village, a modest country estate) on condition that they accompany him to war wearing a coat of mail and followed by so many valets or serving men. And also there were those still smaller fry who, in return for few privileges, were obligated to carry a shield for a richer and more powerful noble.

But all these classes were free men, under the same code of laws, which they themselves made and administered. And everybody else was in a condition of more or less absolute servitude, subject to the laws made for them and administered over them by the nobles, petty and great, lay and ecclesiastic.

We have taken up the case of "the people" as they themselves took it up; especially at Laon, because there we got in epitome the struggle between the citizens and their ecclesiastical overlords.

At Péronne let us think particularly of the power of great nobles who dared to jail their kings. For, in order to comprehend the epoch when the most important history was being made in these towns of northern France, we have to think first of the nobles, and then of the bishops and abbots, and then of the people, and lastly of the kings who struggled against all three of those classes to hold their job and to nationalize their morcellated country. Every phase of that continual strife was necessary and, in the outcome, beneficial. The more we know about them the better we shall meet the demands of our own era; for there is nothing in today's problems that has not in essence been many times trodden out in the long, long history of these towns we are studying.

The counts of Vermandois were haughty nobles and, for the most part, even more quarrelsome and acquisitive than other nobles of their very quarrelsome and predatory times.

The first of them of whom we have record is that Pepin, Count of Péronne, who took St. Quentin and set up the feudal state which he called Vermandois in honour of the old Belgian Gauls who had once lived there, the Veromandues.

Then along came Raoul, the Count of Cambrai, who had decided to enlarge his dominions by helping himself to St. Quentin and Péronne. Behind him in this rapacity he had his powerful brother Baldwin II, Count of Flanders.

Pepin seems to have died about this time, and his son, Herbert, finding himself without estates, appealed to his suzerain, the Duke of France.

In one of the fights that ensued, Raoul was defeated and killed. And to avenge this, his brother, Baldwin of Flanders, hired an assassin to murder the reinstated Herbert. And Herbert's son and heir retaliated by marching upon Cambrai and sacking it.

This Herbert II who thus inaugurated his career was a sort of Ulysses of the early Middle Age, "the most original figure of the tenth century and the personification of that disorderly day from which issued the world of feudalism and chivalry." He had a way of taking what didn't belong to him which lent a glamour of romance to such practices. About him and his exploits there grew up a whole new school of hero-tales in which dash and gallantry seemed to atone for lack of scruples.

On and on in this gay career went Herbert until he had acquired a vast fief extending over Amiens and Arras and Laon and Soissons and Noyon and Châlons and much else besides—"all the course of the Somme, and all the country between the Somme, the Marne, and the Meuse."

Small wonder if Herbert, sighing for more worlds to conquer, "picked on" that weak and unimportant person, the King of France, whom history calls Charles the Simple, and who seems to have deserved the name.

On some pretext or other which any one but a very

simple king should have seen through, Herbert lured Charles to St. Quentin and passed him thence to other places (including Château-Thierry), always in captivity, lodging him finally in the donjon at Péronne where the wretched monarch died of starvation and neglect—six years of it were required to make an end of him.

There is a legend that Charles's son, Louis IV, avenged his father's death by causing Herbert to be hung. But there is no evidence in support of this.

The imprisonment and slow starvation of his King was not the last of Herbert's violences. But at length he died. And, as if he had exhausted the violence in his strain, his successors were peaceable and pious men who avoided getting themselves talked about at a time when it must have required a very sturdy determination to keep decently retiring.

The last of them, Herbert IV, left no son, only a daughter Adèle, who was married to Hugh, a brother of King Philip I of France. The great estates of Vermandois passed to Adèle's son, Raoul, married to Alice of Guyenne, sister of Eleanor who made so much history in France and England—Eleanor, who was wife to two kings and mother of two.

Raoul seems to have been a very decent sort of person, and Alice a much less troublesome lady than Eleanor. They had three children: a son, Raoul, who was a leper and left no issue; a daughter, Isabel, who was wife to Count Philip of Flanders, and died childless; and a second daughter Eleanor, who sold her claim on Vermandois to Philippe-Auguste, as described in our chapter on Amiens.

Philippe-Auguste granted a charter to Péronne in 1209.

In the fifteenth century Péronne shared the vicis-

situdes of all those "towns of the Somme," which by one treaty after another passed from France to Burgundy and back, and back again. Louis XI retook it from Burgundy in 1477, just after the death of his great vassal, Charles the Bold, who had imprisoned him there nine years before and forced him to do his will.

Charles V unsuccessfully besieged Péronne in 1536, when one of the chief defenders was a woman named Marie Foure to whose memory a statue stood in the little town, until the Germans made a rubble-heap of what had once been Péronne, in the late war. The anniversary of the raising of that siege was celebrated each year until 1914.

In 1871 the town suffered much from German bombardment.

IX

NOYON

DURING a long, weary while, when the efforts of France and of her allies seemed likely to wear out the resistance of civilization before the enemies of civilization were weakened in their purpose or in their power, a Paris editor who thought he knew what should be done used to run, at the bottom of his leading editorial each day, this line: "The Germans are still at Noyon."

Over and over and over again he hurled that reminder at the world. And at last he was given the opportunity to see what he could do about dislodging the Germans.

Not everybody who fulminates in print against what seem to him to be the blunders of his government, gets a chance to show how much better he would do; and not everyone who gets such a chance "makes good." But this editor did. His name is Georges Clemenceau.

The reason why Clemenceau singled out Noyon for his battle-cry is, probably, that it was nearest to Paris of those towns from which the enemy could not (seemingly) be dispossessed—only sixty-seven miles from the capital is it; and there the Germans held undisputed sway for year after year and French people

lived (if they could) or died, shut away from all knowledge of their nation, their soldiers in France's armies, or the fortunes of war.

There may, however, have been a special bitterness in knowing the Hun dominant at Noyon, because Noyon is the cradle of much French history.

To be sure, it is with the making of kings that Noyon's fame is linked; but France, though she is through with kings, is far from disdainful of what kings did for her in the ages when she needed them. And we who would know France cannot make a beginning thereunto until we have rather clearly in mind the chief phases, at least, in the rise and fall of her royal power. For on that nearly everything depended—liberties, laws, religion, living conditions, learning, arts.

It was at Noyon that Pepin the Short, having decided to assume the crown, had himself proclaimed and anointed King, in 752, and at the same time crowned his infant son, Carloman, King of Noyon.

Charlemagne, Pepin's younger son, was crowned at Noyon in 768; and his empire had been irreparably split into many pieces (just as the kingdom of his predecessors had been) before men realized that those ever-recurrent partitions and shifts of authority were a bad basis for peace and progress.

Then Hugh Capet was crowned at Noyon. And to insure the "election" of his descendants, Hugh inaugurated a new fashion: he had his own coronation quickly followed by that of his eldest son, Robert; and Robert, on his accession, used what power he had (it was not a great deal, but it sufficed) to get his heir "elected" and crowned.

Four generations of this accustomed people's minds

to the idea of the Capets as permanent. In reality, the first Capets were not the strongest suzerains in France whereof they continued to be rather chiefs among chieftains than kings over all. But various agencies were helping them to hold their own and to increase it. The bitter quarrel between the popes and the German emperors inclined the popes to favour the French kings—not because they liked the French kings, but because they disliked the German emperors. That was one thing that helped the Capets. The rapacious behaviour of the great vassals was another. The Norman conquest of England was an aid because it was a threat—the great suzerains of France would even unite in support of the Crown, if need be, to oppose the power of the Norman duke who was now become King of England as well. And the First Crusade, though the King of France had no part in it (being under the ban of excommunication for putting away his wife and espousing a lady already supplied with one husband) did, perhaps, most of all for the Capets, because it gave them prestige in the Orient where three new kingdoms were set up under French kings, and because it began the breaking-up of sectional insularity in the great fiefs and made men proud to be French.

The second race of kings that Noyon gave to France was established in power rather by circumstance than by natural dominance of the men who wore the crown.

Noyon, which had become a bishopric about 530 and was soon celebrated for the piety of its bishops and the wealth and power of its religious institutions, was one of the many additions that Herbert II made to his county of Vermandois. It was during the long, peaceful, and sagely beneficent suzerainty of Herbert's

son, Albert, that Noyon witnessed the coronation of Hugh Capet.

The amount of territory over which the Capets were all-powerful was less than one twentieth of France in 1914—before the restoration of her east provinces.

To the east of them lay the great county of Champagne, and the county and vast duchy of Burgundy and the enormous duchy of Lorraine extending to the North Sea. South of them extended the duchy of Aquitaine, comprising territory a dozen times greater than the royal domain; the county of Toulouse; and other fiefs including Provençe. West of them was the county of Anjou and the duchy of Brittany. North of them were the duchy of Normandy and the county of Flanders.

The story of the way that house of Capet made itself regnant over all that agglomeration of peoples (for they really were of great variety) is one of supreme interest—not because the Capets were either better or worse than any other family of hereditary rulers would probably have been, but because so much besides their permanence in power was always at stake in the game they played; so much that was fraught with consequences not for France's civilization alone but for that of all the Western World.

After Noyon saw Hugh Capet crowned, her further participation in the affairs of the kingdom was almost wholly at a distance; her bishops, her soldiers, wrought for France—but not at Noyon. Very little happened at Noyon; yet Noyon played a part in nearly everything of national import, and always we find her aiding the expansion of the Capet power.

The first four Capets—Hugh and Robert and Henry and Philip—did little to increase the power of the Crown, or its possessions. Then came Louis VI who

did much for the power of the Crown though not much to add to its possessions. And after him, Louis VII who added the vast duchy of Aquitaine to the royal domain by marriage with its heiress, Eleanor, and then not only alienated it by divorcing her, but opened the way for centuries of strife (without meaning to) because Eleanor promptly married Henry of Anjou known as Henry Plantagenet.

This, when Anjou ascended the English throne, gave Louis a vassal who, besides being King of England was Duke of Normandy, Duke of Aquitaine, Count of Anjou and of Poitou and of Touraine, which made him suzerain over far more of France than France's king was.

If Louis had put away Eleanor for no other reason than distaste, thereby bringing this serious state of affairs upon his kingdom, there could scarcely be found words adequately to condemn him. But he had another reason: Eleanor had given him no heir, only daughters; and he knew what disorders would follow his death if he left the kingdom to dissension over the succession to the crown. All that had been accomplished to put France in the way of order and prosperity would be jeopardized by a struggle among the vassals for supremacy. Louis chose what seemed to him the lesser evil. And the son whom he begot by his second marriage certainly did much to justify Louis's choice.

That son was Philippe-Auguste who in a reign of thirty years made his family the richest in France, if not indeed the richest in Europe, and added to the royal domain until he not only doubled it but doubled the double. He regained for the Crown all England's possessions in France save Aquitaine, and knew his

son and heir, Louis, conqueror of nearly all the east of England and received with homage in London where he might have been crowned had not the hated King John died and left a nine-year-old son whom the barons could presumably mould nearer to their hearts' desire; so they bought off the French claim. A great warrior was Philip. But the greatest conquest he made was done not by force of arms but by a judicial decision—which had power because the Crown of France had power to enforce it—when he summoned his vassal, King John of England, to appear before him and answer for his disregard of the laws under which he held his French fiefs; and John, being found guilty, was deprived of all his French possessions.

Louis VIII, Philippe-Auguste's heir, added many rich provinces to the crown domain of France, but he lost some to England (in the south-west) and he weakened the royal riches and strength by willing great counties to his second, third, and fourth sons thus reverting to the policy which had wrecked the two preceding dynasties.

Still, the monarchy to which Louis IX succeeded and which he so sagely managed that he won the name of "Saint Louis" was truly a great monarchy, not only in extent but in the influential place it filled in European affairs and, most of all, in the order and development it made possible for France.

Saint Louis's long minority gave the great vassals who were opposed to the growing power of the Crown courage to make some attempts to reinstate that condition which the early Capets knew. But the wisdom and firmness of the queen-regent, Blanche of Castile, frustrated these. And Louis himself, when he was twenty-eight, so effectively suppressed a feudal re-

bellion that it was the last ever attempted toward the destruction of royal preponderance.

The royal power of France now became the greatest moral force of the Middle Ages, and the kingdom whose sovereigns were strongly established abroad as well as at home entered upon an era of attainments and developments which entitle it to be called a veritable Golden Age.

The son and heir of Saint Louis was a great military builder, and under him castles and fortresses and walled towns, all over France, bespoke the purpose and the power of the Crown to maintain the authority it had struggled so long and so hard to acquire. It was under him (Philip III, called *le Hardi*) that the southwest of France was brought, by inheritance and by statecraft and by conquest, under the royal sway in a degree to which it had never before been subject. Philip IV (called the Fair) married the heiress of Champagne and of Navarre, and added those rich provinces to the crown properties; he bought, confiscated, and conquered others. But the outstanding facts about his reign were his success in matching the royal power of France against the power of the popes, whom he brought to Avignon and reduced to a sort of slavery to the French Crown, and the great advance of royal authority as wielded by decrees rather than by force of arms. Philip IV had advanced to the realization that if one is known to be strong and able to fight, many things (if not most things) can be taken by process of "law." It was to increase the legal power of the Crown that Philip so organized and strengthened the King's council and the *parlement* that they seem almost to have originated under him. His object was despotic, not benign; but he had contributed something

to his kingdom which curbed his successors in a way he could not foresee. *Two* "somethings," in fact. For it was he who first called to a political rôle in the realm the burghers of France, the "third estate," the elected officials of the communes. Philip summoned his "States-General," or clergy, nobles, and commoners, to uphold the Crown in his quarrel with Pope Boniface in 1302. They met in Notre Dame de Paris and urged the King to maintain "the sovereign freedom of this State which is such that you may recognize as your superior no one but God."

Five times during his reign Philip the Fair convoked the States-General. Although he was the most despotic of the Capets, so far, he was also the founder of popular power in national affairs. With that new element added to a well-organized central government, France should have been in the way of enduring peace and prosperity. But again she was to be racked by dissensions about royal inheritance.

Three sons of Philip reigned in succession after him, and all died without male heirs; whereupon the crown passed to their cousin, Philip of Valois, whose father had been Philip the Fair's next younger brother.

There was no law excluding females from inheriting the throne. There was, rather, a custom or tradition not yet wholly obsolete, that kings of France were elected. This had always been a form, a sort of pretence, which the Capets got around by having their oldest sons elected.

The children of Philip III, if they had been bent upon complicating the succession, could not have made marriages fuller of mischief-possibilities. I won't go into all the details here, but we must mention one or two. Philip III's only daughter, Margaret, was

the wife of Edward I of England and mother of Edward II. The only daughter of Philip the Fair (Margaret's brother) was Isabel who married her first cousin, Edward II and became the mother of Edward III.

Edward III of England might or might not have pressed his claim to his French grandfather's throne had certain conditions been otherwise. He was a mere boy, and he had troubles a-plenty at home. For nine years after Philip of Valois's accession, Edward put forward no demands, although he was rebellious, at Amiens, over the degree of homage required of him as a vassal of the French Crown. What precipitated the Hundred Years' War was not so much Edward's desire to rule another kingdom, overseas, when Wales and Scotland were giving him such trouble close at home; it was a matter o' wool! England had many sheep, much wool to sell. Flanders had many weavers who bought England's wool and sold England cloth. The rich and turbulent wool-weavers of Flanders found profit in unrestricted trade with England. But the Count of Flanders was a vassal of the French Crown and, moreover, he was married to a daughter of a French king (Philip V) so his loyalty and interests lay with France. In wool was wealth. England's wool-raisers demanded free access to the Flemish markets; Flanders's wool-weavers demanded absolute freedom to buy wool and sell cloth in England. The Count of Flanders tried to give France first rights; his wool magnates protested; his sovereign lent him aid to subdue the magnates. Edward's wool-raisers urged on him that he was the rightful King of France; "push your claim," they insisted; "establish your sovereignty; the 'wool interests' demand it." This pleased the Ger-

man Emperor who agreed to help England because thereby he hoped to hurt France.

So the Hundred Years' War began; and in its weary length France suffered every conceivable horror. Her kings, with a single exception, were futile almost beyond belief. Her nobility degenerated from the proud chivalry that triumphed at Bouvines, to the ineffective captains who fell in defeated thousands at Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt; and from the Crusaders of Saint Louis to the murdering, pillaging ruffians who took advantage of France's peril and need to further their own cut-throat purposes, and played into the hands of her enemies when it seemed that more profit lay there than in loyalty. The new communes of France were unable to weather the terrific stress of that century of war, and they fell, one by one, and were superseded by ruffianly autocracy—that of bishops as ruffianly as was that of lay counts. The Church was corrupt and shameless. The trade of the cities was demoralized. The countrysides were ravaged until the peasants, hiding in caves, either "sold themselves to the devil" and turned bandits, or sought to deliver themselves over as slaves to any master who would feed and protect them. Then came the Black Plague, a variety of the bubonic, and carried off nearly half the inhabitants of France. And everywhere were uprisings in which thousands perished; and the multitudinous victims of starvation—besides all that fell in battles and sieges and the unending destruction of villages and towns. In some districts a dozen parishes contributed nothing to the tax-extortioners, "because there are no longer any parishioners." Grass grew in the streets of Paris, prowling wolves snatched infants from their very doorsteps,

and "the abomination of desolation" lay over everything.

All this could, and did, happen because France when this war began was not yet a nation but an agglomeration of states without unity of experience, of idea, of feeling, of purpose. High and low, the spirit prevailing was that of "Every man for himself and the devil for the hindmost," till the Maid of France appeared and made to all her countrymen that mystical appeal in response to which they became *patriots*. Thus was France saved, unified by a common faith, a common ardour.

It was a peasant girl who led this tremendous awakening of national consciousness. And it was the "third estate" or commoners which first rallied from the disorder attendant upon so much shame and misery, and gave the Crown authority and support and *funds*, to restore the realm that Jeanne d'Arc had given the desire for life.

Noyon had her share in all these phases of France's history.

Her militia fought valiantly for Philippe-Auguste at Bouvines, and came home filled with justifiable pride in that supremacy they had helped France establish. They fought no less valiantly, but with bitter results, at Courtrai and Crécy and other battles wherein France's banners trailed in the dust of disastrous defeat. Noyon was ravaged by the English and by the Burgundians, during that long conflict, and suffered as did all the towns of Northern France especially.

One of Noyon's bishops died whilst crusading with Saint Louis; another was made prisoner in that uprising of the lower orders against the miseries of the Hundred Years' War which was the Bolshevism of

its day, and was known as "the Jacquerie." (It, too, made treaties with the nation's enemy. And, deplorable as was the state of France, she repudiated this sort of peasant reform, and suffered on through threescore more years and ten before she accepted the leadership of a peasant who called for a patriotism of faith and upholding and not of betraying and tearing down.)

Noyon was in the Duke of Burgundy's hands when Jeanne d'Arc was taken prisoner at Compiègne, and it was at Noyon that she was delivered to him by Jean of Luxembourg.

There are a few Noyon episodes that you may care to recall: the "joyous entry" of Philip of Valois after he succeeded to the crown of the Capets—it was on this occasion that he ordered the Noyon belfry built; and the meeting, in 1516, of the French and Spanish plenipotentiaries who there signed the Treaty of Noyon by which they hoped to establish a permanent peace between their respective countries.

Very little came of those hopes—as of most hopes founded on treaties.

A great deal more came to France and all the western world through one who was a little boy of seven when those glittering ambassadors met in his native town of Noyon: John Calvin.

This little boy's father was "a notary-apostolic and procurator-fiscal" for the lordship of Noyon. His business, under that high-sounding name, was probably the legal and financial affairs of the cathedral chapter, and he was so much associated with the canons that it was natural for him to destine his second son to an ecclesiastical career. The father's influence in the chapter secured John a "chaplaincy" in the cathedral

when the lad was only twelve; and at that time the future reformer was tonsured.

I think you will like to imagine him, a small, pale, lustrous-eyed youngster with his little poll shaved, officiating in some modest way at one of the altars of the old cathedral. The actual duties of his office were performed for him by an ordained priest, but John doubtless appeared and rendered altar service of some sort, and the pay that he received was enough, after he had compensated his substitute, to give him many advantages in education.

Noyon was stricken by the plague in 1523, and to escape it John was sent to Paris to study at the College de la Marche. So good a student was he that the canons of Noyon gave him a curacy soon after his eighteenth birthday, although he was not ordained. In the month when he was twenty, he became curé of his father's native village, near Noyon (Pont-l'Évêque), and preached there, though he still was not ordained.

It was about this time that he seems to have read and studied the Bible which had just been translated into French by his kinsman, Olivétan; and what he read made him question much that had been taught him.

Also about this time, father and son seem to have agreed that after all John was too promising for the priesthood; and he went to Orléans to study law under the most distinguished jurisconsult of his day. He did not, however, resign either his chaplaincy at Noyon cathedral or his curacy at Pont-l'Évêque, for nearly six years more, though he was seldom at either place during all that time.

When, later, Calvin demanded reform in the practice of granting sinecures to children or to absentees, and

also in those cumulations whereby one person (fit or unfit) might hold a dozen priestly offices at once without actually serving any of them, he knew whereof he complained.

His work as theologian and reformer had, however, no association with Noyon, being done at Geneva and Strasbourg principally. But at Noyon one may see his birthplace, at a corner of the rue Fromenteresse; one may imagine him, a frocked and tonsured lad, in the cathedral; and one may find the place favourable for some reflections on the movement which arrayed so many besides John Calvin against the faith in which they were nurtured, and involved all Europe in the bitterest warfare and perhaps the bloodiest that ever was up to our own times.

So long as one thinks of the Reformation merely as a war between two creeds, he is little likely to comprehend much about it. It was that, of course; but it was more. It was many things more than that; and in one of its phases, it was, in France, another chapter in the long, long struggle of the Crown against the powers that menaced its supremacy.

When France emerged from the desolation of the Hundred Years' War, she was so disgusted with weak rule and the disorders it entailed (in Charles VI's long reign, especially) that she put into the hands of Charles VII and endured at the hands of Louis XI more absolute power even than was required to meet the chaotic situation. Then came four kings—Charles VIII, Louis XII, Francis I, and Henry II—who made their rule, stiff as it was, immensely popular because of its magnificence at home and the vistas of promise they opened up by their campaigns abroad, especially in Italy. In the Middle Ages no period was so rich in prosperity

and well-being for the greater numbers in France as that inaugurated by Philippe-Auguste and terminated when Philip the Fair left three weak sons who died without male issue. In modern times, so-called, no period was so satisfying to the population at large as that inaugurated by Charles VIII and terminated when Henry II left three weak sons who died without male issue.

Each of these periods was characterized by a good strong monarchy under which people had much security and many opportunities for commercial and agricultural expansion. Living conditions bettered for everyone; horizons widened, ideas multiplied; there was an element of romance, of limitless possibilities to which almost everyone might aspire. In the first period this tremendous access of interest, this multifold improvement in life, resulted from the Crusades. In the second period, immense stimulation came through the opening up of many new worlds: North and South America, India, China, Japan, the isles of the sea.

The good strong governments of each period were in themselves excellent—on the whole—and they derived popularity not only from their capable handling of internal affairs but from the zest and profit of the times lent by world-movements.

What might have happened in France if Philip the Fair had left a son and a grandson of his own calibre, it is idle to conjecture. But we can understand how the people reckoned when, after more than a century of shocking disorders and frightful sufferings, they felt that the hand at the helm could scarcely be powerful enough; and when, with that resumption of royal strength, came another era of prosperity greater than ever before, it was scarcely to be expected that any

but the sagest would try to analyze how much of it was due to their kings' use of power and how much to conditions of which the kings only took advantage.

So the Crown was very popular with the people, and correspondingly unpopular with the Church and with the nobles, when John Calvin was a tonsured lad at Noyon.

Now, the Reformation had a great deal to do with many persons' profound disgust of selling indulgences; of bestowing bishoprics on rakes who made not the slightest pretence of being priests or fulfilling sacred duties; monastic scandals; abandonment of the people to ignorant, superstitious worship which was mere idolatry, etc.

But the Church had often been in reprobation for the same or similar practices; and though reform after reform arose, most of them were put down as heresies with the sword and with the stake. Some intimidation, some concession, sufficed to deal with these demands for better conditions; but presently there came a demand that could not be "laid."

This was not because the Church was in a worse way than ever before; nor was it wholly because more people than ever before were capable of thinking for themselves and ready to stick to their opinions. There had been times when misery was so general and so great that it could scarcely be worse; and such times make easy the way of rebellion. But these were times of unparalleled prosperity. Depopulated and devastated towns and villages were repopulated and rebuilt till there was scarce room to move about in them. A third of the realm which had never before been under cultivation was now yielding vast harvests; for every rich merchant of aforetime there were now

fifty; France had commerce with all the world; the gold of Peru and the silver of Mexico poured in streams through her counting houses; magnificent public works were going forward in every corner of the kingdom; it was a very heyday of material well-being and beckoning opportunity. One might wonder why people so prosperous after a long period of starvation and anarchy, could not have come to some understanding about transubstantiation and investitures, and steer clear of a hideous internecine war.

Doubtless the Reformation was due to come: inevitable in human progress and necessary thereto. Church absolutism is as opposed to that freedom of choice whereby comes development, as any other form of despotism—indeed, rather worse than any other. But the extreme violence with which men's demands for individual opinion on the Eucharist and purgatory were met not by the Church alone but by the State, had its explanation in other passions than zeal, other policies than the sanctity and supremacy of the Holy See.

Nationalism was strong in France when the Reformation got under way. And everyone was sick of strife except that for conquest abroad. Why didn't France come to some sort of terms with persons who wished to believe in predestination and salvation by faith rather than by fasting and penances? Because the situation was promptly and powerfully taken in hand politically, by parties determined to use it for the furtherance of their own power in state affairs.

The kings of France were popular and were disposed to keep their popularity with the people because it meant general prosperity and a check on the Church and on the nobles. Also, their attitude was influenced by their foreign relations.

The papacy was opposed to the popularity of any temporal monarchs, because it meant a too great independence of the Vatican authority; but it was in a new agreement with the Crown of France concerning investitures.

And the nobles, jealous of the crown riches and power, were divided in opinion as to what they desired. Some wanted a king ruled by Rome—a vassal of the sovereign pontiff, like themselves. Some wanted a break with Rome, confiscation of all the enormously rich church holdings, distribution of the latter among the nobles (as in Germany and England), and a return thereby to conditions more nearly feudal than then existed.

It was the old feudal spirit of absolute dominion which made the nobles resent and punish horribly the presumption of their "subjects" in differing from the suzerain's beliefs. And the "subjects," who were learning to think of themselves as subjects of the Crown and not of its vassals, resented the intimidation.

About half of the nobles embraced Protestantism at first—then recanted. Partly they were moved by convictions, and partly by expectations. A great factor in confederating many nobles under the Huguenot standards late in Calvin's life was their enmity against the Guise family who were intensely Catholic, immensely powerful, and anti-nationalist.

This massing of other nobles, as Protestants, gave a great armed force to the rebels against Rome, one which could fight on an equal footing with the army of the King.

Think, then, where the King of France found himself when John Calvin was a young beneficiary of Noyon cathedral and beginning to question the behaviour of the Church! He had a big war of foreign

conquest (in Italy) on his hands, and a continually increasing lot of trouble with Spain and Austria (united under Charles V) over the Burgundian inheritance. He might need England's aid, at any time, and he might need the Protestant princes of Germany. He certainly needed the support of his people at home. But the majority of the people were Catholic. And the Protestant nobles who might give him most aid in Italy and against Spain and Austria were leagued against his royal power.

Noyon was taken by the Spaniards after the fall of St. Quentin, and made to pay a heavy ransom. In 1591 Henry IV besieged and took Noyon; and four years later it was again besieged and taken, for the Leaguers, by the Duke of Mayenne, younger brother of the murdered Duke of Guise.

The Spaniards came again, in the Thirty Years' War; the city resisted them, but they sacked and burned the suburbs.

After their withdrawal, Noyon returned to the dignified ways of peace which have mainly characterized her existence.

On Sunday, August 30, 1914, Noyon heard the explosions which told her remaining citizens that the railway bridges were blown up and the town definitively cut off from her defenders.

At noon that day a captain of Uhlans rode into the courtyard of the Hôtel de Ville, covered Mayor Ernest Noel with his revolver, ordered that venerable magistrate to the head of the enemy scouting column, and after forcing him to run about the city until he was nearly dead, locked him up whilst thirty hostages were seized. A German officer was installed in the Mayor's office, and the reign of terror was on.

Orgy and pillage inaugurated that reign, and when the inhabitants complained, the invaders told them: "In five days we shall be in Paris, where we shall demand twenty billion francs, and the war will be over."

"You reckon without the French army," was the proud reply.

On September 11th, the confused mass of defeated Germans pouring back from the Marne gave Noyon's citizens brief joy. There was fighting between French troops and Germans close to Noyon for nearly a week; then the French were repulsed from the vicinity and the wretched people of Noyon entered upon thirty months of captivity.

Deportations of men from 17 to 45 years of age began on September 29th. When, in November, M. Noel protested against these and against other barbarities and violations of The Hague Code, he was reminded by the German Staff officer to whom he made his protest that "we are making war upon all France; our object is to ruin her and reduce her by every means possible. The more merciless our acts, the shorter will be the war."

When M. Noel charged the German officers in command at Noyon with making war upon babies and mothers, he was dragged from his home at eleven o'clock one February night (1915) locked up in a room of the Hôtel de Ville, and soon thereafter sent into captivity at the Rastatt prison camp.

At the beginning of December, 1916, convoys of artillery and munitions passing through Noyon toward the north were taken by the people of Noyon as indication that deliverance was at hand.

Then the German occupants began to destroy what they despaired of holding. Houses were dynamited

or burned; bridges blown up; streets and roads piled with hideous débris, seed planted in the ploughed fields was torn up; fruit trees were cut down, farm implements were broken, animals were driven off, and—worst of all—women and young girls were ravished from their families and sent away behind the new German lines.

It was not, however, until Sunday, March 18th, that the French army re-entered Noyon and, as M. Noel says, "the curtain which had so long hid our country from our sight was drawn."

One of the first persons to rush to the martyred city when its executioners were driven away was Madame Carrel, wife of the eminent surgeon, whose hospital was at Compiègne, fifteen miles away. The dreadful sights and sounds and smells of a war hospital had been her daily portion for many months. Yet the poor creatures who came crawling out of cellars at Noyon when their tormentors left, were almost beyond her endurance and quite beyond the endurance of many of the nurses at Compiègne, who fainted at their tasks of mercy as they tried to restore those poor martyrs to something like human semblance.

A year-and-a-day, or thereabouts, the emaciated wraiths of Noyon breathed free air—amid ruins and desolation, it is true, but air unpolluted by the presence of fiends.

Then, on a March day of 1918, those that were left, those that had returned, those who were struggling to rebuild and rehabilitate, saw the muddy, sweaty, bloody, swaggering demons come surging back again—and there they stayed until Noyon was retaken in the closing phase of the war.

The glorious old Cathedral, affectionately known in

France as "the mother of French cathedrals," was rent in twain just before the final evacuation.

Little remains of the beautiful, dignified, tranquil old town that I knew, framed in apple and cherry trees and full of peace and amply justifiable pride. But no one who knows Noyon's history can doubt that it will go on without a break; for here is the very cradle of France.

X

REIMS

THERE is a tradition that Reims was founded by Remus, brother of Romulus, and is, thus, a twin sister of Rome.

Some historians scoff at this. But if you like to believe it, their doubts need not deter you. For the most marked characteristic of modern research has been the finding of proofs which reinstate in the best standing very many things the scholarship of a generation ago had dismissed as fables.

Romulus was a much better authenticated personage on my last visits to Rome than on my first; and many another legend was emerging from the limbo of myth into the very best society of indisputable facts.

Flodoard credited the Remus story; and he was a careful historian who wrote from the archives of the cathedral, of which he was canon. Born at Epérnay (fifteen miles from Reims), educated in the Reims cathedral school, and all his life a delver in the past of that vicinity, he is a good authority to cite if you have a fancy (as I have) for the Remus story. To be sure, Flodoard has been dead for almost a thousand years, and things have been learned since his day. But so, too, have things been forgotten. You may suit yourself.

We do know that the tribes from round about Reims made excursions into Italy not much later than the day of Remus, and that they may have been making transalpine raids even earlier. Perhaps they brought Remus back with them. Perhaps he came adventuring on his own account. Perhaps he didn't come at all.

But when Julius Cæsar came he found a city rich and well-governed, with equitable laws and many excellent institutions, including a mint which coined money bearing the name of Remo; it was the capital of a people who called themselves the Remi.

And it seems not to have occurred to the people of Reims to offer any resistance to the Roman legions; at first sight of javelins, helmets, and burnished shields glinting in the sunlight, they sent out two prominent citizens to offer their submission. Cæsar at once received the Remi's oath of allegiance to Rome; and not only did he accept them as allies, but he sought their counsel for the further prosecution of his campaign against the Belgæ—sought it and, what's more, followed it; the Remi told him how to conquer Belgian Gaul; and when, after he had left the scene of his conquests, the Belgæ uprose against him, it was the Remi who summoned him to the rescue and marched with him to put down the insurrection. The chief of their republic perished on this expedition. And Cæsar, to show his respect for them and his confidence, demanded no changes in their political affairs, but permitted them to act freely—as allies, not as a conquered race. They expressed their gratitude to him in many ways, not least in the war against Pompey, where they gave him valiant service.

Under Augustus, Tiberius, and Nero, Reims was

peaceful and very prosperous, and enjoyed all the advantages of the most advanced civilization.

And when, after Nero's death, the druids sang that the last days of the Empire were come, and "the domination of the universe" was about to pass to nations beyond the Alps, the people of Reims, instead of joining with Civilis, the Batavian chief, and Sabinus, their neighbour, to establish an empire independent of Rome, persuaded the cantons of Gaul to send deputies to an assembly at Reims, with instructions to vote for peace with Rome or for a war for independence.

When the conclave was assembled, it soon became evident that the two leaders were a deputy from Trèves named Valentinus, who was violently anti-Roman, and a citizen of Reims named Auspex, who "spoke of the benefits of peace and of the sanctity of treaties." And it was the latter, Tacitus tells us, who was able to bring the factions together, appealing to the honour and duty of the sagest among them, and restraining the young and rash by his oratorial pictures of Rome's power to crush. "They praised the courage of Valentinus, but they followed the counsel of Auspex."

And for this the Emperor Vespasian recompensed Reims—as well he might, for its sane loyalty saved him a great deal of trouble.

In those days the city of Reims was oval in shape, and traversed from south to north and from east to west by two principal streets which intersected at the Place d'Armes, and terminated at the four gates in the town wall. Each of these gates was flanked by a triumphal arch, and the north arch, beneath which passed the road to Laon, is still standing, having escaped the modern Vandals. The Porte de Mars it is called; and it is said the Remi erected it in honour

of Julius and Augustus Cæsar. Near it was a temple of Mars, in the years when the city was still pagan.

There were a fine capitol, and an amphitheatre, and a circus, and baths, theatres, markets, a forum, rich palaces, an abundance of fine sculpture and superb mosaics and mural painting and marble inlay and all the other elegance of Rome, mistress of the world.

Flodoard says that it was Sixtus, sent thither by St. Peter himself, who brought the gospel to Reims. And some early writers mention fifty martyrs of the first century, including St. Timothy. Others say that Christianity was not accepted at Reims earlier than the middle years of the fourth century when the Roman Consul Jovinius, a native of Reims, was converted to Christianity although he was one of those chiefly instrumental in putting Julian on the throne of Constantine and had fought for the Apostate in Asia Minor. Perhaps it was because he saw so much of Julian's effort to bring back paganism into the Roman world that Constantine had Christianized, that Jovinius made so good a defender of the faith. At any rate, Reims seems to have owed a good deal to the impetus that he there gave the preaching of the gospel.

Life was just one swarming of the barbarians after another, in those years. Julian came to Reims to fight them off, in 357. Valentinian was there, beating them back, nine years later.

In 406 the Vandals came over the Rhine seeking what they might devour and destroy. Some of the inhabitants of Reims fled when they heard the Vandals were coming. Others remained, and manned the ramparts. But the attacking force was innumerable and hurled forward fresh "shock troops" faster than the heroic defenders could beat them back. The

people of Reims took refuge in their church of Notre Dame, gathering about their good Bishop, Nicaise who, when he saw that they were all doomed, prepared his flock to meet death and perished with them.

The Vandals sacked the beautiful Roman city, revelling in damage almost as much as in plunder, as their wont was. Then those who had escaped their fury came back, and reorganized life amid the ruins. A generation laboured to restore. Then Attila and his Huns arrived, and laid the city waste again.

Once more the havoc was repaired. But Rome's Western Empire was disintegrating, and pagan chieftains were ruling in France. Clovis, chief of the Franks, treated the ecclesiastics with respect, because he was shrewdly aware of their influence over the people. But his passive tolerance was not what the Church needed and wanted. It wanted to use the Crown for its own purposes.

The wife of Clovis was a Burgundian princess, Clotilde, who was a Christian and a woman of no little strength of character. She seems to have known how to make her husband respect her religion. He permitted his children to be baptized, and even punished sacrilege in his soldiers—if we are to believe the oft-told story of the vase of Soissons which a soldier of Clovis stole from a church there and wilfully broke when ordered to return it; for which disrespect Clovis smote the man dead with one blow of his battle-axe.

Doubtless Queen Clotilde had no little to do with facilitating the introduction of Remi, or Remigius, Bishop of Reims, into the court of Clovis, as a courtier. And there Remi sagely endeared himself to the King by his good counsels on affairs of state—for which the Bishop had a great gift.

As a consequence of these influences, Clovis made a vow—when entering the battle of Tolbiac the issue of which meant so much to him—that if Clotilde's God would give him the victory, he would become a Christian.

Clovis triumphed and he kept his promise. (One does not know whether to envy such faith in our power to compound with Providence, or to be shocked by it.)

After the victory, Clovis and his triumphant soldiers repaired to Reims. And there Clotilde and Remi waited—employing their best tact, doubtless, so that the exultant King should not feel coerced. So successful were they that Clovis did not rest content with delivering himself an adherent to the Christian faith, but persuaded his warriors also to renounce their false gods; three thousand of them with their wives and children were baptized with him—also, the two sisters of Clovis.

The ceremony of receiving into the Church Clovis and his followers took place on Christmas day, 495:

"The streets, which the cortège traversed were hung with rich-coloured fabrics; but nothing equalled the magnificence of the cathedral. The people," says Flodoard, "believed themselves transported into the dwelling place of the angels," and Clovis himself, when he entered the cathedral and saw its radiance, smelt its incense and perfumes, asked the Bishop if this was the kingdom of God which he had been told he would inherit.

Three times the sword of Clovis was plunged into the baptistery, as the King swore to "adore what he had burned, and burn what he had adored."

Remi, after having blest the baptismal fonts, awaited the holy oil which a priest had gone to fetch; but the cleric

was held fast in the throng outside. Then, that this imposing ceremony might lack nothing, not even the sanction of miracles, a dove whiter than snow descended from heaven and laid on the altar a vial filled with divine balm. This vial, so celebrated under the name of *sainte ampoule*, was of glass or crystal, and filled with a tawny liquor the reverse of transparent.

"Cold" history says that this tale of the dove was invented by Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims, nearly four hundred years after the baptism of Clovis. But wherever it came from, the *sainte ampoule* played a great part in French history for at least nine hundred years. And whatever oil was used to set the seal of Christ on Clovis, it was sufficiently efficacious to make his adoption of the faith seem specially blessed. It was a momentous event for France, and might well have endeared to the nation the place where it occurred. But as a matter of fact there is nothing in history to indicate that Reims was especially revered for several centuries after Clovis's day.

Most of the successors of Remi for three hundred years or so seem to have been scamps of the first water. One of them, Gilles, played a scheming, malodorous part in the sanguinary strife between two French queens, Frédegonde and Brunhilde. Another is signalized in history as having committed sacrilege and perjury as a prelude to committing murder—yet he was canonized! Which may mean that little was expected of bishops in his day, or that he had qualities of some sort outweighing his defects.

Charlemagne seems to have been generous to the churches and monastic schools at Reims; and he held an interview there, in 804, with Pope Leo III. (The Archbishop of Reims in his day was that Turpin to

whom are attributed the beginnings of the hero-tales that celebrated the adventures in Spain of Charlemagne and his twelve knights.)

Twelve years later, Charlemagne's son was crowned at Reims by Pope Stephen IV—not in the cathedral, however, but in the abbey church of Saint-Remi, outside the Roman wall. The Archbishop of Reims at that time was named Ebbo; and by a sad coincidence he who had helped to place the crown on the head of Charlemagne's heir was one of those who later conspired to tear it from him.

The successor of Ebbo was the illustrious Hincmar who not only beautified his episcopal city and put its benevolent and scholastic institutions in a state of brilliant prosperity, but by his research and writings laid the foundation for that reverence in which Reims has ever since been held. If Hincmar invented the *sainte ampoule* his memory shall be no whit the less venerated therefor by me. It was a sagacious thing to do, at that time of rampant feudalism when the Church (for its own ends, but also—as time proved—for France's good and ours) was exerting all its power to preserve the dynasty of Charlemagne, and to make the faithful superstitiously reverent of those kings the Church had crowned.

Belief in the straight-from-Heaven-ness of that crystal vial and its brownish oil brought upwards of thirty kings to Reims to be anointed and crowned, and gave thereby a certain flavour to a right-worshipful old city; which, in its turn, has imparted to millions of human lives a flavour incomparably fine and "fruity" —mellower, and more mellowing, than the choicest vintages from its treasure caves of captive gaiety.

Only one Carlovingian king other than Louis the

Debonair was crowned at Reims—most of the others were crowned at Laon. Hugh Capet was crowned at Noyon, where he was elected. But after him, all the royal monarchs of France for more than eight hundred years, were crowned at Reims, except Henry IV, who was crowned at Chartres, Napoleon I, who was crowned at Paris, and Louis XVIII, Louis Philippe, and Napoleon III, who were not crowned at all.

The cathedral school flourished—notwithstanding its proximity to the famous school at Laon, twenty-eight miles away—and in the latter part of the eleventh century, Bruno (who was educated at Reims, became head of the school, canon of the cathedral, and chancellor of the diocese) retired thence to Grenoble where with six companions he founded the Carthusian order of monks destined to play so influential a part in Europe for many centuries.

Bruno must have had some acquaintance, at Reims, with a scholar named Odo of Châtillon, who came up from his native place, a little town on the Marne not far from Reims, to be educated in the cathedral school, and to become—in due course—Pope Urban II, the preacher of the First Crusade.

There is in Reims (in ruins, now!), a magnificent church enshrining memories of both Bruno and Urban—the abbey church of Saint-Remi which was consecrated in 1049 by Pope Leo IX. This noble edifice was built over and around the original church erected in the sixth century to house the bones of Saint-Remi through whose influence (and that of Queen Clotilde) Christianity had become the religion of France. There, in the soft radiance filtered through priceless old stained glass (some of it dating back to the eleventh century) stood Saint-Remi's tomb, with its sculptures repre-

senting the saint baptizing King Clovis. And around them, a guard of honour, the twelve peers of France kept watch and ward: the bishops of Reims, Laon, Langres, Beauvais, Châlons, and Noyon, the dukes of Burgundy, Normandy, and Aquitaine, and the counts of Flanders, Champagne, and Toulouse.

What was left of the abbey was used, latterly, as the Hôtel Dieu, or hospital; and in the old cloisters was the cenotaph of Jovinius, that Roman consul who was one of the first converts at Reims to the Christian faith.

Once, on a sunny morning when I was loitering in that vicinity, I heard a strange shout from some workmen excavating outside the church enclosure but in what had evidently been part of the abbey burial ground long years ago. Their picks had brought to the sunlight of that summer day a skull—memorial of a past how distant not they nor we could guess. But the incident has always remained very vivid in my mind, so symbolic did it seem of that land where every stroke of today's progress spades up reminders of rich yesterdays.

Seventy years after the dedication of Saint-Remi, or in 1119, there was held at Reims a papal council (the second of four which met there in a hundred years) attended by two hundred and twenty-four archbishops, bishops, and abbés; and at this council two things occurred which are, I think, of general interest. The German Emperor was excommunicated; and the Pope and his advisers sat in judgment on the dissensions between the kings of France and England relative to the latter's tenure of Normandy.

Getting excommunicated had become almost a habit with the German emperors of that day when they

were contending so bitterly against the papal power. The Emperor Henry V might have been expected to proceed cautiously against the papacy—after the deep abasements to which his puissant father was brought by his warfare against it. But the fifth Henry was "brash" and determined to create not only bishops but popes to execute his will. The Holy See won, however. And Henry had to capitulate. For, living under a ban was not to be thought of, no matter how powerful and presuming one might be. Henry was not able to revenge himself upon the Pope; but some years later, having taken up arms against France, he invaded Champagne with the avowed intention of taking Reims and razing the city in which the anathema of the Church had been launched against him. But this amiable plan failed also and it was not until many centuries later that a German Emperor was able to destroy Reims.

In the communal revolution of the twelfth century, Reims played a primary part. Following the example of Noyon, Beauvais, and Laon, her citizens demanded and obtained a charter; and like their fellows in nearly every other episcopal city, they kept up, in defence of their rights, an unremitting and bitter warfare with the clergy jealous of ecclesiastical authority. These conflicts were sanguinary under Louis VII; and they were still adding to the uneasiness of the head that wore the crown a century later—in St. Louis's day.

In 1210, during the reign of Philippe-Auguste, Reims was visited by a conflagration which swept away a considerable part of the city, including the cathedral. And two years later, a new cathedral was begun.

Two elements entered into the building of this as of other great cathedrals of that day—spiritual need

and political expediency. Let us think first of the spiritual.

I am not sure that it is possible for any American, except a very few who are steeped in the feeling of the Middle Ages, to comprehend the spirit which found expression in the great Gothic cathedrals.

Roman Catholics of this day and nation have more links with that spirit than have the persons of any other faith; they apprehend it at least through their self-same attitude toward a church as the shrine of God's presence; the consecration of a sacred edifice means to them much what it meant to their far forbears; symbolism is more pregnant for them than for people of other forms of Christian faith; tradition is dearer to them; their sense of needing priestly and saintly intercession—as contrasted with what I may call the democracy of those who feel privileged to commune directly with God at any time, in any place, without other intercession than that of their need—gives them a veneration for the place where they may find consolation, absolution, and the approach to God, such as no one may know to whom a church is a meeting-house.

But it is doubtful if even any Roman Catholic whose nurture has been in this country understands all that a church meant to the pious of the eleventh to fifteenth centuries.

Our modern attitude toward life precludes such understanding. Whatever our conviction of immortality, it is based on a different valuation of this present span than was prevalent in the Middle Ages.

Heaven, to us, means a condition of continual and beatified being, of endless reunion with those we love. To the devout of the Middle Ages it meant the realiza-

tion of all that life denied them; the hope of it was all that sustained them through the inequalities, iniquities, and inhumanities of a harsh existence—and the way to Heaven was through the offices of the Church.

Furthermore, much that savoured the time of waiting—"the time of my debt," Dante called the bitter years he must "work out" before he could be set free of earth—was also the Church's gift.

The Church could command beauty, and only the Church could utilize beauty—broadly speaking.

Homes were principally places of security and a few rude comforts. But churches were built to glorify God and to give Him sanctuary. They had the money to build superbly—their revenues were vast and their donations and bequests fabulous—and besides being able to pay for the best the world afforded, they were advantaged by the zeal of master-craftsmen who not only laboured for Heaven, but delighted in the Church's patronage because it called for that superlative degree which every artist loves to demand of himself and for which there was, outside the Church, little reward in the years when Gothic art was flowering.

This combination of circumstances enabled the Church so to garb itself as to make a very beautiful and wholly legitimate sensuous appeal to its children, to beautify and emotionalize life for them, as well as lead them to eternity.

Organs came into France from Italy and the near East, at the time of Charlemagne. Stained glass began to lend its mystery and glory quite commonly by the eleventh century. Sculpture took on perfections such as it had not known since the Golden Age of Greece. Tapestry-weaving was developed to adorn churches, and was so used for centuries before it was employed

for domestic purposes even in royal palaces. Painting was inseparable from altar-pieces until long after Gothic art had spent itself. Drama was the church's province, exclusively, and used to instruct and edify —never to divert thoughts from the joys of Heaven and the pains of Hell. Processions and pageants either belonged to the Church's services or, if somewhat secular, were shared by the pastoring priests who shepherded their flocks in nearly all they did. Gorgeous fabrics were designed for altars even more than for thrones. Marvels of goldsmiths' art and treasuries of rare jewels were employed for reliquaries.

Beauty was the Church's handmaiden, and by her constantly employed to do honour to Christ whose bride the Church was.

But even when we remember all this, it scarcely helps us to comprehend how any reverence, or any love, or any opulence, could have developed so transcendent, so suprahuman a majesty and loveliness as a Gothic cathedral. In no other art has mankind ever soared to such heights of the sublime.

When the people of Reims set about the building of a new cathedral, they had many things in mind: they were going to build a house of God; they were going to build a cathedral, or sort of mother house to all the other churches of a diocese; they were going to build the metropolitan cathedral of France, the seat of the primate of the French church; they were going to build the coronation place of France's kings; they were going to erect in stone an edifice worthy to be all those things and commemorative of that baptism of Clovis by virtue of which Reims regarded herself and was regarded as the cradle of Christianity in France.

Naturally, they wanted to exceed everything that

had yet been achieved to the glory of God—in France or elsewhere.

All this they desired to express—and something more.

This other something, which proceeded partly from the people themselves and partly from their rulers, is most essential for any one to have in mind who would understand what the great Gothic cathedrals mean to France.

They are the symbols not only of France's spirituality (which is a more comprehensive thing than her religious faith and fervour) but also of her liberties, her democracy. They memorialize the birth of her civic rights, the dawn of her national unity.

The great era of Gothic cathedral building in France was coincident with the rise of communes, and with the union of commons and Crown against the crushing power and internecine strife of the feudal lords—monastic and secular.

In the eleventh century the abbey domains waxed so extensive and so rich that the abbots were no whit behind the counts and other lay seigneurs in their autocratic sway and scarcely behind them in their greedy, blood-wasting rivalries.

When the populations of towns like Soissons, Noyon, Laon, Amiens, Senlis, Cambrai, revolted against the despotism of their overlords and demanded charters of enfranchisement, they found, as we have seen, shifting encouragement with their kings Louis VI and VII, but a quite consistent friend in Philippe-Auguste who shrewdly recognized the help that the communes could be to him in curtailing the powers of the arrogant nobles and extending the power of the throne—in other words, nationalizing France.

And some of the bishops were wise enough to see

that the feudal era was gravely threatened from above and from below; in consequence of which, many of them cast in their lot with the King—not because they loved the Crown more, but because they loved the divided tyranny less, and because they had many a grievance against their local lords and the abbots.

That a churchman of any rank should actually favour democracy was practically impossible. Belief in the absolutism of the hierarchy is, and always has been, foundational in its own inner circle at least.

But some prelates in every age have been expedient, and some have been adamant in their unyieldingness.

Those who were expedient in Philippe-Auguste's day saw the rising power of the communes under them and the King over them, and conceived a truly great plan for holding their own not only *against* the new powers but actually with those powers' co-operation; they would inaugurate the rebuilding on a splendid scale of the cathedrals, the seats of bishops' authority, in those enfranchised towns; they would encourage the people to regard this as their own undertaking; they would delight them by leading them to flaunt their splendour, their cathedrals, under the very noses of the nobles in their towering castles; they would employ all the finest skill of the people in erecting and adorning houses of worship for themselves instead of houses to support the defiance of great seigneurs. Thus was the rising tide of democracy made to lift up the Church instead of casting it down along with other recognized forms of autocracy.

And the Crown was pleased to aid this. No; it wasn't pure paternalism; it was expediency also.

There was to be many a bitter, bloody feud (how we have continued to characterize internecine strife

by the old word!) between king and clergy, clergy and commons, people and king, and of all three estates against the nobles, before the ultimate triumph of popular government. Many, many times it was to seem that nothing could break the power of the fiefs; then, that nothing could escape the despotism of the Church; and again, that nothing could curb the absolutism of the Crown. But all the weary while, democracy was sending its roots deeper into the soil of France as the storms that tossed its branches waxed in violence. And there, towering in bulk and in majesty above every other manifestation of power, stood—all those strife-full centuries—the cathedrals which, somehow, were never quite wrested from the people, even in the periods of their bitterest oppression, but always symbolized to them their possibilities.

Many abbey churches were destroyed by the frenzied mobs of the Revolution, but few cathedrals. The latter were despoiled of their sacerdotal treasures, by a crazed people whom the Church no less than the Crown had betrayed and oppressed; but the edifices themselves were, for the most part, left standing and rededicated to the worship of Reason.

The Republic of France has never taken any considerable pains to obliterate the "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" signs wherewith, in 1793, the people took possession of the churches; it is faintly rubbed off or overpainted, but nearly everywhere quite legible —with a purpose probably. The last few years have brought a tremendous wind of emotion to fan into fresh flame the spirituality which is so essentially a part of French character. Devotion burns anew. But at the same time there burns with it a new and infinitely stronger flame of liberty. The hierarchy is no more

likely to regain its grip on France than the monarchy or the feudal system. "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" are no longer divorced from God, as in the Revolution. They are, rather, become the motto in Church as in State. And there are even those who look to see France democratize the Church as completely as she has the State.

Viollet-le-Duc places the period of supreme importance to French cathedral-building, between the years 1180 and 1240:

> The period during which the grand cathedrals were conceived and got under way, in expression of an irresistible national desire. Sixty years! Astounding, that in that short space of time it was possible to secure, over so great an extent of territory, results so surprising; because it was not only the workers who had to be found, but thousands of artists—men whose talent is a cause of wonder to us today.

Where did France develop so many master-craftsmen, mighty architects, artists of many sorts? Who knows? The dark ages were scarce lifted. Of popular education there was none. Travel was difficult and dangerous. Books were unknown outside the monasteries. Oppression lay heavy on nearly every class except the nobles. Yet, suddenly, when some five and twenty towns decided, practically all at once, to signalize a new national advance by building five-and-twenty of those marvellous edifices, art and craft was available for them all—and enthusiasm!

No wonder the French venerate their cathedrals as symbols of that which lies in them ready to achieve when Liberty is the watchword!

When the people of Reims, led by their archbishop

and abetted by Philippe-Auguste, decided to signalize their unique glory by building an incomparably splendid new cathedral, what had they to surpass?

Notre Dame de Paris, commenced in 1160, was consecrated in 1182, but this was the choir only. The nave, façade, and towers were not completed until about 1235—when Reims Cathedral was well under way.

Noyon was begun in 1132, its choir consecrated 1157, and was nearly finished when Reims was begun, but was very different in style—only slightly Gothic, and much more allied to the old, Romanesque architecture of the great abbey churches and the older cathedrals.

Senlis, Soissons, Laon, Valenciennes, and Chartres were building, as were Bourges, St. Quentin, and a number of others from which Reims may have derived more or less.

The architect of Reims Cathedral was Robert de Coucy—Coucy, the domain of those proud sires who boasted that they were not kings—some four-and-forty miles away.

The original plan of Robert seems to have been too stupendous for execution, and he had to modify it considerably as the work progressed. And before it had got very far he abandoned it (whether he died or resigned in favour of younger men we don't know). Yet Viollet-le-Duc believed that if we wished to see a cathedral which more completely than any other stood to our view as conceived by its architect of the early thirteenth century (when Gothic was in its glory) it was to Reims that we must go.

I shall not attempt to describe the glorious edifice. Language to evoke it as it was, before the mental view of those who never saw it nor anything its like,

may be possible to someone, but it is certainly not possible to me—any more than it is, conceivably, possible that there are builders today who can restore it to the eye's actual vision.

I knew it from every angle, in every light. I got, somehow, on terms of happy familiarity with it, in spite of its almost awful majesty. I had specially beloved favourites among its portal sculptures. Its stories in stone were constantly rewarding me with some fresh delight—particularly that of the Last Judgment, which adorns the north transept. I have stood, many times, where the Maid of France stood to see her king crowned—bathed in the same celestial light that fell on her vision-illumined face as the salvos of acclaim hailed the sovereign she had brought to his inheritance. I never climbed the towers, as I have at Notre Dame de Paris, nor picked my way beneath the flying buttresses, as at Amiens, nor adventured up into the clerestory nor down into the crypt as I have done in other cathedrals. I don't know why. Unless it was that I was so completely concerned, at Reims Cathedral, with the memories there enshrined, and so completely entranced by the glories that one could have who just sat hour after hour in the nave, watching the light filter through thirteenth century glass with which—it seemed—rubies, sapphires, topazes, emeralds, and other jewels named in the Apocalypse could not vie; thrilling with the soft splendours of age-enhanced tapestries; soaring, in spirit, as only great Gothic art can make one soar; and coming back, without a shock, to realization of the market-women sitting, or kneeling, beside me. They always seem very much in keeping with French cathedrals; but nowhere more than in Reims where the memory of a

peasant girl outshines that of all the kings who came there for anointing.

English cathedrals are haughty. It is not at all uncommon to find persons who have lived all their lives in the shadow cast by an English cathedral's bulk, and have never adventured within the "close." "Only swells go there," I was informed by a delightful small boy, Percy, who on several occasions has accompanied me about Canterbury. Percy used to loiter about the cathedral-gate, when he wasn't in school or picking hops; and if you relished his sort of "guidance" you might have it for a sixpence. (It was worth much more; for, if you were an intelligent roamer, you could find for yourself St. Augustine's abbey and the oldest church in England; but you might pass ignorantly by the " 'orspital" where, only the week before, a 'op-picking lady of Percy's own acquaintance had swelled up as big as a barrel and turned black as your shoe, consequent upon the fatal bite of some insect or reptile concealed among the hops.) But Percy had never been in the cathedral, and probably—if he lives a long lifetime in Canterbury—never will presume to enter therein.

Whereas, on my last visit to Reims I fell into quite a love affair with a girl about Percy's size, who had evidently been sent to market, had stopped in at the cathedral on her way home (with a full basket), and was, beside me, the sole worshipper in the nave that brilliant and busy June Saturday morning some ten weeks before the church was wrapped in martyr flames like those that leaped about the little Maid of France in Rouen's market-place. She stayed by me till I left Reims, at noon—that friendly little soul who evidently liked me because she felt my adoration for

"her" cathedral. And it seemed hers in very sooth! So far from any incongruity in her presence there, with her basket full of cheese and cherries and other market fare, there was a singularly lovely congruity in it that completed the harmony. What in all the world of experience could one wish for, finer than being with a wistful little maid of France the sole worshippers in Reims Cathedral?

It was the 16th of July, 1429, when Charles VII made his entry into Reims for coronation—led by a little maid of France.

Jeanne d'Arc "offered him the keys of the city and went before him showing him the way as if to fulfill in every detail the prediction which had been so many times repeated, that she should conduct him to the church to have him crowned."

It was the custom that the prince about to become king should present himself, mounted on a white horse, at one of the principal gates of the city and there receive the keys from the municipal magistrates. But Jeanne, obeying the Voices, changed this; and thereafter, in memory of her, it was always a young girl who performed this office.

The prince went directly to the cathedral, and knelt at the main portal where the archbishop met him, gave him the gospel to kiss, and conducted him into the choir of the cathedral, which had been made very large and splendid for these ceremonials. A Te Deum was chanted, and a Canticle of kings. Then the prince withdrew and was welcomed to the archbishop's palace, which was the royal residence on all occasions when royalty came to Reims.

On the day of coronation, the bishops of Laon and Beauvais went in great state and ceremony to the

palace to fetch the prince. And another deputation of four great nobles betook itself to the abbey of Saint-Remi to get the holy oil brought by the dove from Heaven to anoint Clovis. Before they were entrusted with this precious vial, these dignitaries had to swear, on the gospel, that they would protect the treasure with their lives, if need was. And if the abbot wished he could demand that some of them stay as hostages for the safe return of the *sainte ampoule.*

In great pomp the royal cortège proceeded the short distance from the palace (adjoining the cathedral on the south) to the main portal and through its wide-flung doors down the nave and up into the choir. There the archbishop charged the king to "conserve to the clergy and to the churches their jurisdiction and their privileges."

The king swore to do this. Then the bishops of Laon and Beauvais presented him to the assembled multitude and asked them if they accepted him as their sovereign. When the people had given their assent, the king, his hand on the gospel, took the oath to conserve the peace of the church, to put down violences, to respect justice, and to exterminate heresy. This oath was in Latin, and custom demanded that it be sworn in a loud voice.

Meanwhile, there were disposed on the altar the coronation vestments: the camisole of crimson satin, embroidered in gold, the dalmatica, the mantle of white velvet sown with fleurs de lys, the crown, the sceptre, sword, and spurs.

After the oath and investiture the archbishop anointed the king, placed the crown on his head, and conducted him to the throne.

When the king was seated on the throne, in all his

regalia, the archbishop knelt before him and kissed him, then cried three times: *Vivat rex in Æternum.* The twelve peers of the realm repeated the same ceremony. And there followed great unsheathing of loyal swords, blaring of jubilant trumpets, and acclaiming cries—in the midst of which white doves were set fluttering free from the top of the pinnacled rood-screen.

Afterwards, there was a sumptuous repast in the palace, very ceremonious and probably very tiresome, but deemed essential.

The cost of all this pomp and pageantry was borne not by the crown, but by the city of Reims. But the town seems always to have been amply able to afford the distinction.

Aside from the coronations not a great deal of interest happened at Reims after the cathedral was built; and even the royal ceremonies were comparatively uninteresting—except a few. After Henry III had fallen through an assassin's knife, it was recalled that when the crown was placed on his head he had complained: "It pricks me." And after poor, stupid, unfortunate Louis XVI's decrowned head had dropped into Sanson's basket beneath the guillotine, there were not lacking those who recalled that when the crown was set thereon he had put up his hand and murmured: "It hurts me."

A revolutionary mob in Reims, registering its fury against kings, went to the abbey church of Saint-Remi, seized the *sainte ampoule* and dashed it into fragments at the foot of Louis XV's statue in the Place Royale, behind the cathedral. They destroyed the statue, too. Both these were comprehensible, indeed quite inevitable, acts. Incomprehensible, though, was the destruction of much priceless stained glass in the

cathedral; the profanation of tombs whose occupants had been in nowise responsible for kingly or priestly or feudal tyranny; and other deeds of unreasoning violence.

But Reims had no stomach for the wholesale blood-letting which characterized the Bolsheviki rule of the Terror. Two archdeacons and a canon of the cathedral were sacrificed to popular fury, not by the people of Reims but by Terrorist agents sent there. But the people of the the old town which had fought its good fights against many of the kings it crowned and against many of the bishops who had temporal as well as ecclesiastical authority over it "witnessed with horror the terrible executions of three churchmen and of Montlosier, maréchal of the king's camps and armies; and the majority of proscribed persons were aided to escape or safely hidden by their fellow-citizens. More, the people carried their protest into reprisals, and burned one of the most exalted of the Terrorists."

In February, 1814, the Russians took Reims and held it till May 5th, when one of Napoleon's generals retook it. He held it but briefly, and the second time Napoleon himself came to the rescue. In 1870, the Prussians occupied it, mulcted it of much wealth, did it much damage.

But a generation later it was again a beautiful city filled with prosperous and cultured folk—and with "*kultured*" folk, too; for Germans had vast champagne interests there, and under cover of them carried on the preparations to subjugate France.

The wine industry was that by which Reims was most widely known, latterly. But in spite of its magnitude, it was not her greatest. Reims was the busiest centre in France for the manufacture of fine woollen

fabrics, and nearly a fourth of her total population of 110,000 were employed in that industry.

Von Bulow's left wing—the Prussian Guard—entered Reims on September 3, 1914.

"There was no fighting either in the town itself or in the immediate neighbourhood," states the mayor, "and the forts had been evacuated by our troops."

The Germans imposed requisitions on the city, from which they demanded a million francs in cash; and while they were in process of laying these demands before the mayor, on September 4th, one of their batteries began to bombard the town! In three quarters of an hour thirty-five persons were killed and twenty-five wounded.

Not a great deal of damage was done then, although the cathedral was struck. It was "their" town, according to their calculations, and they hadn't time to stop for much except necessary provisioning, because they had pressing engagements to fill in Paris!

On September 12th, in their retreat from the Marne, they evacuated Reims. But they seized a body of civilians to ensure the safety of their evacuating forces.

They posted in the streets the following proclamation:

> In order sufficiently to insure the safety of our troops and the tranquillity of the population of Reims, the persons mentioned have been seized as hostages by the Commander of the German Army; these will be hung if there is the least disorder.

A list of eighty prominent citizens was appended, with a note that "several others" had been taken as well.

"A hundred hostages," states the mayor, "including

myself, were led out into the country, five hundred yards beyond the last houses of Reims."

Another of that hundred was Monseigneur Neveux, auxiliary bishop of Reims, who says that it was about six o'clock in the evening when the sad cortège, beaten upon by a pelting rain, was led out beyond the city and halted near the East Cemetery where they were told, after some agonizing suspense, that the city had behaved very well and they were free.

That march in the rain and the torturing uncertainty was quite unnecessary; but the Germans' enjoyment of it probably mitigated in some degree their chagrin at having to evacuate. And immediately that diversion was over, they settled down to the destruction of the city and its treasures and as many as possible of its inhabitants, by bombardment. They began on the very day of their evacuation, and ceased only as the war ended. Much of the time the rain of shells averaged from five thousand to fifteen thousand daily!

Little by little the population dwindled, the habitable parts of the city decreased in extent and increased in desolation. But nowhere in all the world was there another city so prepared for subterranean life. Reims is supplied with miles on miles of champagne cellars (where, even yet, some forty or fifty millions of bottles of champagne are said to be stored); and into these much of the city's life retired when conditions above ground became unendurable or risky beyond all prudence.

Of those who stayed on there were several classes. Many were at their posts of duty; some were not able to tear themselves loose from loved locations. The cardinal on his daily walks abroad, one day entered a very humble little house all about which shells had

fallen thick, pocking and piercing and unroofing and creating a scene of desolation and danger. In answer to his advice that the inhabitants go away, they said: "Ah! Monseigneur, it is our house, we built it, we furnished it, we protect it."

Persons of this sort, and others, stayed on at Reims, year after year. Hospitals multiplied, and with them the numbers of administrators, doctors, nurses, and humbler assistants. The stretcher-bearers of the Red Cross traversed the shell-swept streets to carry succour and bring in the wounded. Firemen fought their always perilous fight amid new perils of raining shells. Sometimes they answered as many as twenty-two alarms in a single night; and the light of upleaping flames showed the Germans where to direct their murderous guns. The devotion and courage of these men (many of whom sacrificed their lives in the effort to save others) moved onlookers to tears.

Other brave men mounted the roofs of dwellings to repair them; and performed necessary labours of divers sorts, regardless of danger.

"We were not abandoned," says Mgr. Neveux, "by any trade. We never lacked bread; the butcher shops and groceries were open; the milk-women went through the streets each day ringing a bell which perhaps prevented them from hearing the shriek of the shells, but did not safeguard them from explosions. The market had its market-women, although they had frequently to seek refuge in the cellars."

The postmen made their rounds. City officials went about their administrative affairs. The newspaper *The Light of the East* appeared regularly. And for a long time, while still there were children at Reims, they played in the streets whenever they could escape

from the cellars where they went to school. One little boy of eight who was wounded was asked how it had happened. "The shell didn't make a noise!" he complained, indignantly.

Those religious communities who served persons who could be moved and should not be permitted to stay in danger, made prudent concessions. But those which served the soldiers, and citizens obliged to remain in Reims, went about their business with sublime disregard of German terrorism.

The sisters of various orders washed and mended hundreds of thousands of pieces of clothing belonging to the soldiers of the trenches near Reims and the barracks in the city; aided, in this, by poor women who gladly rendered the men defending them such service as they hoped might be rendered by other women, otherwheres, to *their* husbands and brothers and sons.

And those men in the defence lines! When General Gouraud asked volunteers for a specially perilous and prolonged undertaking, one of those who presented himself was known to his General as the father of a family.

"Why don't you let the young fellows go?" Gouraud asked him. "You have three children."

"It is precisely for them that I wish to do it," the man replied.

For years, Reims and the soldiers defending her lived in a marvellously close relation of devotion one to the other. They were years that developed heroism and elevation of a degree difficult for us to realize.

And throughout it all the people and the soldiers stationed there were shepherded by an old man almost incomparably valiant: Cardinal Luçon, past his al-

lotted span of years when this tempest broke upon him, but incredibly strong to endure and to console. His ministrations to the fighting men and to the suffering civilians are beyond all praise. His anguish and his courage and his services make him worthy to be named with Cardinal Mercier.

His *Journal* of the siege is before me as I write; and Mgr. Neveux's account of him; and many another. I had thought to quote from them. But diaries written under continued bombardment do not greatly differ one from another; and I have given extracts from some, in other chapters.

Yet I am not satisfied to conclude this chapter with any expression of my feeling over the destruction of Reims. Passionate as it is, and representative of a world-wide sorrow of resentment and loss, it is not what I would have you carry in your memory as you think of Reims.

Instead, let me endeavour to transcribe for you Eugène Morand's superb passages dealing with Reims in the dramatic poem, *Les Cathedrals*, written by him for Sarah Bernhardt and played by her with a splendour transcending words. The drama has never been translated; and Madame Bernhardt has given but one performance of it in this country, so it is not known to Americans as it should be.

Under a twilight sky lies a plain o'erhung with mists and fogs, a plain of the North, between the trenches. Solitary, a mutilated tree twists its tortured trunk, a black silhouette of suffering against a grey, bleak world.

Bugles sound afar off. Some men returning from a searching party enter, look staringly about, then go on their way.

One stays behind. He is One of Them—of those youths

in whom is centred all the hope of the country. And he is not able to take his gaze from that desolate plain where his village was, nor from the ruins which are all that is left of his home.

Above the plain great voices indistinctly rumble, ceaselessly—the voices of cannon.

The young soldier halts. His soul is strong, but his body is broken and he sinks down, exhausted, beside a shattered gun-carriage.

Gradually his eyes close; he sleeps, he dreams.

Night falls. The mist rolls up like a curtain and discloses the sky. And in the dark immensity, emerging as from an ocean of clouds, the shades of cathedrals appear bearing figures of sculptured stone. And these figures speak as the voices of the cathedrals.

They are Notre-Dame de Paris, Bourges, Amiens, Arles, and Saint-Pol-de-Léon.

They have met to strengthen one another for their great duty to France; and as they pray together for their children gone to do battle for the liberties of mankind, they note, tenderly, the young soldier sleeping beside the shattered gun-carriage and dreaming of his home which "yesterday was there in the plain, and today is no more than a cooled brand still smoking on the horizon."

They speak to him—those old, old, old great-grandmothers who have seen so many generations of French youth go forth to battle and to immortality.

And he, his eyes still misty with his dreams, recognizes the apparitions among the clouds.

They talk together—he and they—and then from the east comes the old chanson of Alsace which dies away in the night; and the succeeding silence is broken by the booming of the great bell of "a cathedral toward the East."

They know that voice! The sister-cathedrals who have not heard it for more than forty years, and the young soldier who has never heard it.

"Name it not to me!" he cries. "By the leaping of the

heart in my breast, I know who it is that so agitates me: It is Strasbourg!"

Yes, "escaped from the talons of the vultures"—Strasbourg!

But the gladness of the reunion is shadowed.

"Among you, my sisters, making common prayer with me tonight, there is one dear to my heart that I do not see —Reims."

"Pearl of the realm, where with Holy Chrism and Balm thy bishops crowned the kings, 'tis thou thyself that art crowned today, in fire and massacre, O town nailed to the cross!"

"Crouching beneath their houses, expecting neither pity nor mercy except from Heaven, her citizens wait and pray. The monstrous cannon of the Hun fire unceasingly."

"And one alone is standing. Alone. The Cathedral! On an immense pyre whose flames writhe and twist, the fire between her feet cracking the flagstones, she prays; and her neck is pilloried in fire. Chained to the stake, as the smoke mounts in clouds about her, she prays and commends her soul to God. And while the armies clash below her, she stretches out her arms that a hurricane of iron has mutilated; and, holding aloft the cross, in that hell and in despite of all, Reims, queen among cathedrals, staring heavenward with her blinded eyes, is as a martyr in the hands of her executioners."

Then there appears, tinging the sky, a red reflection—the flames enveloping Reims—and the voice of the dying martyr chants:

"O Lord my God in whom I trust, like Thee in Pilate's house I wear the scarlet robe—it is the blood of my sons —I know the rod and the cross."

As if from Heaven's courts a celestial choir chants:

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

"I who in Thy name, Lord, crowned the kings," Reims continues, "have felt on my brow that dolour has bent

the crown of thorns furiously pressed down. I have emptied the chalice and I have borne my cross."

Again the choir: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

"The ninth hour, O God!" cries Reims upon the cross; "the ninth hour strikes for me. They have mocked me with gall, Lord, and in their rage they have spat in my face their iron and flame. Christ be praised: I die upon the cross."

"Blessed," chants the choir, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The sister cathedrals weep for her and commend her soul to God. And the young soldier of France promises her that she shall be avenged.

It is Strasbourg who delivers to the youth this charge:

"The torch which they, fleeing, have left forgotten at the portal, let us snatch up, still burning; and in the night which they wish to draw about their crime, let us shake the savage sparks—shake them on a world that sometimes doubts and wavers; and if that world, often cowardly, refuses to bring to judgment the executioners, then do you, our sons, to keep alive our sworn hatred, pass on, pass on the torch of infamy; in every hour, in every place, by every route and road, from hand to hand, from century to century, from age to age, illumine the savage crime. For ever and for ever and for ever! Until the day of the Last Judgment. Then, at the Tribunal which shall grant no more delays, throwing at the feet of God that still-smoking torch, cry to Him: Lord God, here is the proof. Judge Thou them!"

XI

COUCY-LE-CHÂTEAU

LIFE so abundant as that of France does not flourish on thin soil; the growths and decay of centuries enrich today's plenitudes and assure tomorrow's harvests—not materially alone, but in all the domains of the mind and spirit. One lives, in France, in a consciousness of the past which is a tremendous enhancement of the present and a promise for the future. That past is not dependent upon visible reminders for its power to fructify. But those reminders are of incalculable help. They are the story-books of history that he who runs may read.

The Germans knew how much those memorials of the past meant to France and to France's Allies, and they were determined—before they came swarming over the Rhine this last time—to obliterate as many of them as possible. There was no sudden "military necessity" about what they did; no random wantonness of invading soldiers.

The plan was to strip France, and with her all civilization, of everything—so far as possible—which made her a land of infinite inspiration, the fertile mother of arts.

One of the innumerable acts of sheer vandalism which resulted from this determination is the destruction of

the magnificent ruin of Coucy-le-Château, one of the most interesting evidences of feudal strength and grandeur remaining to modern times.

Coucy is about ten miles due north of Soissons and nearly the same distance west of Laon.

Clovis gave the land whereon Coucy is built to Remi for the bishopric of Reims; and about the beginning of the tenth century the Archbishop of Reims caused a fortress to be erected there—to which Herbert of Vermandois was not long in taking a violent fancy. Herbert helped himself to the Archbishop's castle and all that pertained thereto.

The extreme defensibility of the situation made it an object of more than common envy among the predatory lords of those days, and it changed "owners" many times before we find it, early in the twelfth century, the stronghold of that arch-villain Thomas de Marle upon whose insubordination Louis VI waged war. The Château de Coucy was considered impregnable then; and the King's forces did not find it otherwise. But Thomas, to show how little fear he had for a puny thing like a king of France, made a sortie from his castle to brush away the annoying besiegers—and was mortally wounded by the Count of Vermandois, a descendant of old Herbert the Acquisitive. Thomas died the next day at Laon, whither he had been dragged to point a moral in the triumphal entry of a king who refused to be defied.

I have not the genealogical table of Thomas's house, and do not know if it was his grandson or other descendant who went crusading with Philip Augustus and Cœur de Lion in 1190.

When this knight fell, mortally wounded by the infidels, he charged his squire to cut out his heart and

carry it home to the lady for whom it could no longer beat: Gabrielle de Vergi, married to the sire of Fayel castle, two miles north of St. Quentin.

All the long, weary way back to Fayel travelled the faithful squire; but when he got there, Gabrielle's husband, suspecting that he came on an amorous errand, killed him and took possession of the loving heart. More, he roasted the heart and had it served to the unsuspecting Gabrielle. When she had eaten it, he told her "with what meat he had served her."

"So sweet was it," the lady cried, "that I will eat naught else for ever!"

And she held to her vow till she died of hunger.

A thirteenth century poem called *The Romance of the Châtelaine of Coucy and the Lady of Fayel* relates in grisly detail this typical tale of mediævalism which became as celebrated throughout Europe as that of Francesca da Rimini.

And now we're come to a doughty person beside whom his progenitor, Thomas de Marle, is a mere bad boy: Enguerrand III, Sire of Coucy and most powerful vassal of the French Crown under three kings: Philippe-Auguste, Louis VIII, and Louis IX.

Enguerrand inherited many fiefs, helped himself to many others, and married a number more; with each of his three wives he greatly augmented his wealth and power. If it was his father whose heart Gabrielle ate, Enguerrand III did not partake of its romantic qualities. Instead of beating true till death for a lady bound to a cruel husband, Enguerrand's heart had a way of leading him to heiresses—and, it would seem, to sickly ones.

Enguerrand was as defiant of the Church as his progenitor, Thomas, had been of the King. Excommunica-

tion had, apparently, no terrors for him. He ravaged the territory of the archbishopric of Reims, but was obliged to withdraw by Philippe-Auguste, who likewise was not afraid of the Church, but used it when he could to make himself more truly and more widely regnant. Enguerrand was one of the heroes of Bouvines; and for some reason or other, which probably had nothing to do with heresy, he was one of that immense army which proceeded against Raymond, Count of Toulouse, to punish him for his refusal to persecute his subjects, the Albigensians.

The Albigensian doctrine had as adherents a majority of the inhabitants of south-western France. They rejected the Old Testament; kept the teachings of the New without accepting Christ as an actual person; believed in the transmigration of souls; condemned the scandalous laxity of the Catholic clergy, and held that no sacraments could be transmitted through such hands; etc.

The Pope declared this a crusade and gave those who went upon it indulgences the same as for an expedition to Palestine. Perhaps Enguerrand thus expiated his impiety against the archbishopric of Reims. But if such was his motive, he soon fell from grace; for he had scarcely returned from the south-west when he began quarrelling with the chapter of Laon Cathedral, seized the dean, threw him into a dungeon at Coucy, and kept him there for two years in spite of the protests of bishops and the intervention of the Pope.

It was soon after the release of the dean that Enguerrand—moved partly by prudent remembrance of the enmities he had raised up against him and partly by his ambitious intent to raise up some more—decided to build a new castle, worthy of his wealth and power,

and also of his proud motto: "No king am I, nor prince, nor duke, nor even count; I am the Sire of Coucy."

So Enguerrand built himself, in 1225–1230, the strongest house in Europe: "a vast edifice, conceived as a whole and built at one time to the order of one immensely rich and powerful."

The plateau on which the castle stood is of very irregular shape and rises about 160 feet above the fertile valley it dominates. At the north-west end of the valley is Noyon, and at the north-east end is Chauny; to the south is Soissons. The river flowing through the valley connects the Oise and the Aisne.

At the north extremity of this plateau, where the rocky descent to the valley below was very steep, Enguerrand built his castle, covering an area of about forty thousand square feet. Between the outer defences of the castle and the inner defences of the town there was a huge, fortified base-court covering at least three times as much ground as the castle. And beyond that, the balance of the plateau—perhaps two thirds in all—was occupied by the walled city.

So that any one who had business with the Sire of Coucy approached him in such wise as this: First, he got into the town, if he could, by one of the guarded gates—after crossing the moat by way of the drawbridge and satisfying sundry piked and helmeted persons that he was entitled to pass beneath the raised portcullis.

These formalities behind, he proceeded through the narrow streets of the town until he came to two huge defence towers flanking another moat and another drawbridge. If he got past those, he found himself in the base-court where the next line of protection for the Sire of Coucy was; and in due course he came to a

very wide and very deep moat (sixty-five feet wide), crossed by a battlemented bridge operated in three sections—so that even if the first and second were taken by the enemy assault, the third would be still defensible.

More pikes and helmets, more guards, another portcullis, and the visitor might (or might not!) find himself within the castle enclosure—that is to say, in a long vaulted passage armed to the teeth and nicely arranged so that, if his entrance were regretted, he could be discouraged with floods of boiling oil or a hail of heavy stones from the machicoulis above.

If he seemed sufficiently trustworthy to escape the boiling oil, or heavy stones, or blazing pitch, he found himself then in the courtyard of the castle, frowned down upon by mighty walls and great defence towers sixty feet in diameter and one hundred and fifteen feet high. At his left was another moat, a circular one, and across it another drawbridge, another portcullis, another covered passage deftly arranged for the descent of death from above.

Those who got so far were almost in the residence of Enguerrand.

He lived in the donjon, that tower compared with which all others in Europe were but spindles; two hundred and ten feet high it was, and one hundred feet in diameter; and, as the walls were in some of the most assailable parts thirty-four feet thick, one can readily see that Enguerrand's living space was more secure than commodious.

It was no light matter to call upon the Sire of Coucy. And sometimes it was, after one had finished his visit, a matter still less light to get away. For the dungeons of Coucy were many and deep; and if the Sire of Coucy

wished to prolong the stay of a caller, there was nothing for the caller to do but acquiesce. Nor could he entertain much hope of rescue—that unwilling guest; for who could take him from such a place?

Perhaps the king would order the Sire of Coucy to give his prisoner up. And perhaps the Sire of Coucy would do it, and perhaps he wouldn't. It all depended on how strong the king was and how much he was probably willing to do to enforce his command, and whether the Sire of Coucy felt like incurring the inconvenience of a siege.

Enguerrand kept always with him in this castle fifty knights each with nine men-at-arms. This garrison of five hundred was needed to guard the castle in ordinary times; in times extraordinary it was augmented to a thousand.

And such were the resources of the castle—the space for lodging, the capacity of the enormous food cellars, the water supply, the completeness of the domestic and industrial organization for meeting all human needs—that Enguerrand could sustain a siege of a year or more, and during all that time furnish his huge household and his workers and his thousand warriors with every necessity of food, drink, clothes, munitions, medical and spiritual care, entertainment, and what-not.

Small wonder that Enguerrand dreamed of making himself king of France, as Hugh Capet had done!

He was an elderly man, then, with more than a quarter-century of warfare behind him; but he may well have believed himself much more than a match for the Queen-regent, Blanche of Castile, struggling against a formidable coalition of vassals to hold the throne for her little son, Louis IX.

But Blanche had wisdom and finesse, and Enguerrand's dream came to naught, whilst her son became one of the very best kings that France or any other country ever had.

Nor did Coucy, great fortress that it was, play any important part in French history.

Enguerrand's son went crusading with his King (St. Louis) and was killed at the battle of Mansourah, in Egypt, where Louis was made prisoner.

More than a hundred years later, Enguerrand VII was sent to England as one of the hostages for King John, taken prisoner at Poitiers. He was the last of the old sires of Coucy, and his lordship lasted over fifty years. In 1400 the domain was bought by Louis of Orleans, brother of Charles VI, who did much to make the castle more habitable. Dukes of Orleans were its seigneurs for nearly four hundred years (the last to own it was Philippe "*Egalité*" who perished on the scaffold during the Terror), although after the fortress was dismantled by Mazarin's orders, in 1652, the owners were so indifferent to it that they permitted people of the vicinity to cart away vast quantities of building materials in the same casual manner that had been employed in despoiling the Colosseum at Rome. This went on for two hundred years. Then the Commission of Historic Monuments undertook to preserve what was left of the château as a souvenir of feudalism.

The work of arresting collapse was entrusted to the great architect and student of mediævalism Viollet-le-Duc who had this to say of the reason such structures should be preserved:

Feudalism oppressed the people, but it forced them to live; it woke them up; it abused them but it drove them

to know their rights and to defend them by argument and, when they could, by force; it taught them to have recourse to the laws of the land, and made them study jurisprudence; by its very excesses it provoked the indignation of the oppressed against their oppressors. The envy which its privileges aroused became a strong stimulant to energy.

Feudalism aroused the military spirit of the people, it taught the townsfolk the art of fortification and defence . . . it developed personal responsibility, which monarchism tends to diminish; it accustomed each individual to struggle. It was, on the whole, one of those providential elements which have contributed to the grandeur of our country. So, let us revere the ruins of its dwelling places; because it is, perhaps, to them that we owe our own place as the most united nation of the Western World —the nation whose understanding of government has weighed mightily and will weigh more mightily upon the destinies of Europe.

Thus speaks one eminent student of the past, out of another generation, to the men and women of our day, and especially of our land, who say: "Why bemoan the demolition of a ruin, and especially of a ruin which perpetuated such savage memories as those of feudal strife?"

Another French student of the past whose summary of our debt to feudalism you may like to recall in connection with the destruction of this great monument is Alfred Rambaud to whose epitomes of vast events (as contained in his college text-book of nearly 1300 pages on *The History of French Civilization*) I find myself continually recurring after excursions among the monographists and other specialists; I know nothing quite so satisfying as his ability to put the pith of a period into a paragraph—and into the sort of paragraph

which needs no re-reading but makes itself immediately comprehensible.

We have seen [he says] how in other countries, as among ourselves, the downfall of a great empire brought anarchy; for example, India of the eighteenth century after the collapse of the Mongol Empire. But in these countries the anarchy was more frightful than with us, and entirely irremediable, because no institution comparable to feudalism came to remedy it. Feudalism saved France from consequences which must, without this system, have followed the disintegration of Charlemagne's Empire. It rendered a great service by introducing into disorder the elements of order; by attaching one to the others in certain obligations, all the men of war; by bringing together in voluntary associations all those who held any power; by creating, in the midst of the ruins of Roman and Carlovingian rule, a new organization; by setting up, in the annihilation of old laws, a sort of public justice. Feudalism probably prevented more wars than it caused. The men of the feudal era were rude and violent, and the feudal contract was the only rein which could have held them in any check.

By that free contract, they attached themselves where it seemed to them their interests would best be served. They recognized as authority only that which they had voluntarily accepted. They were not so obligated that they did not retain the truly royal right of peace and war. They were judged by their peers, and could refuse to submit to their sentence. . . . The feudal régime may be defined as the "régime of contract." Roman despotism had levelled, crushed, debased all classes; feudalism restored to man his lost dignity. The Roman Empire had exaggerated the right of the State; feudalism perhaps exaggerated the right of the individual, but it is only by the regenerated individual that a new social order may be worked out. The citizens of ancient Greek and Roman republics were never as free as the members of feudal society. True, this

freedom was only for the nobles; but the new principles it introduced were the ones which later relieved the condition of the people.

The age of Enguerrand III and the building of Coucy was the golden era of cathedral-building in France. It was an age of many and great beneficences; a time of plentiful employment, good wages, low living costs, numerous free hospitals, powerful guilds of craftsmen, and decenter living conditions for the majority than had ever before been known.

Also, it was still the heyday of chivalry. And we must remember that chivalry was the flower of strength; men like Enguerrand III, who defied any power to humble them, were the very ones who did most to popularize ideals of protection for the weak, adoration of women, fidelity to their vows, rigorous observance of their chivalresque code. In knighthood, the poorest chevalier took the same vows as the greatest vassals and their sovereigns, and all were bound together in a nobility of service which made them equals in many things.

"Nothing did more to bring French civilization out of ancient barbarism than the feudal *culte* of the woman."

Nor were the benefits of this by any means confined to the stately dames in castle halls. The French peasant women then, as now, shared the labours of their husbands and were partners in the profits thereof; the husbands had confidence in their wives' sagacity, listened to their counsels, even suffered their reprimands; the wives kept the house, took care of the money, dictated the economies. Queen Blanche, directing the affairs of the kingdom whilst closely supervising the education of the young King, was not

a phenomenon; she was, rather, the supreme type of the women for whom, as well as for their men folk, she governed.

Coucy was one of the most interesting memorials of those days left in France. Viollet-le-Duc says that

> if the task of ruining the seignorial residence of the sires of Coucy had been left to time alone we should see to-day those enormous constructions in their primitive splendour because the materials have not suffered any deterioration; the buildings were constructed in a manner which should have made them last eternally, and the interior decorations in places sheltered from the elements are as fresh as when they were made.

Nowadays, no masonry is serviceable for defence purposes; and the grand old ruin of Coucy-le-Château was about as formidable in a military way as a telegraph pole. But as a monument of the past, an educational and romantic treasury, it was precious to France and to all who inherit through her. Therefore the Germans employed many tons of dynamite or T N T to reduce the majestic pile to powder which the winds may scatter.

You who visit the battlefields of yesterday will all but surely go to Coucy. You will go there from Soissons, probably, and on your way to the forest of St. Gobain (about three and one-half miles north-east of Coucy) from which Paris was shelled by the Germans' long-range guns.

You will see nothing at Coucy but a vast rubble-heap, typical of what Germany purposed for all France.

I cannot hope to make you see Coucy as I knew it. But I can tell you a few of the many things that old

pile said to me. And perhaps I can help to keep alive in you that fire of resentment which should never die —of resentment for the insensate fury of German hate and destructiveness which has robbed you of so much that was your rightful heritage.

XII

ST. QUENTIN

ABOUT three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, July twenty-sixth, 1914, I stood in the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville (or City Hall Square) of St. Quentin, gazing up at the monument there erected to those citizens of the town who had fought with Coligny to defend St. Quentin against Philip II of Spain.

Up a narrow street to eastward we could glimpse part of the great bulk of St. Quentin's church, into which a multitude of folk—mostly young—were pouring for some special service.

My knowledge of the saints' calendar is not what it should be. It was by no means clear to me what the occasion was, but even without understanding of that, I could never be without reverent appreciation of the piety and of the pictorial beauty when I found myself witness at one of the frequent pageants wherewith the church of Rome satisfies so many of the spiritual emotions of its children.

We were forever coming unexpectedly upon some occasion when long lines of little maids in full-skirted white dresses and flowing white veils, with virgin-blue ribbons across their breasts and glimmering tall tapers in their hands, walked two abreast in the shadowy, vaulted aisles of a venerable cathedral or church, past

Gothic tombs of dead worthies (and unworthies) and chapels whose transfiguring glory of old stained glass had fallen athwart twenty generations.

Back of the little maids walked larger maids; then matrons in their prime; then old, bent and tottering grandames, most of them in mourning.

Likewise the little lads were followed by youths and men and grandfathers. Ahead of all were the priests, with the sacrament—forever leading the generations in acts of faith.

As the great organ rolled its billows of sound through the vast edifice, and voices shrill and resonant and quavering rose like beating wings against the lofty roof, there always came to me a tremendous sense of the procession we call Life, which goes on and on behind the symbols of its hopes, bearing its flickering tapers and chanting its canticles of faith.

Some such procession was imminent at St. Quentin that Sunday afternoon. So we went to church.

And there we were rewarded with a spectacle much longer than that our bodily vision beheld. For, when the last of the light-bearers had passed us, their tapers trembling in hands that had served much, there was no void behind them; we saw others, also, as one does who knows how to see in ancient fanes.

On and on and on they came, out of the shadows, across our standing-place, and passed into the shadows beyond—those Others!—their tapers flickering in the current of air they created. On and on and on, that unending multitude in St. Quentin's church, their footfalls echoing above the crypt where St. Quentin's bones lay, and their voices soaring toward where St. Quentin's spirit dwells.

He was a young Roman of senatorial family who,

while the persecution of Christians was at its height, embraced the faith of those who suffered, and became one of a band of missionaries to Gaul. They went to certain martyrdom at the hands of their own countrymen in Gaul—those young patricians to whom Rome offered everything except what they deemed their supreme duty—but though the faith their sacrifice strengthened was often grotesque, verging on buffoonery, hard to distinguish from paganism, constantly trafficked in and traduced by its own prelates, it always had in it something to remind men and women that consecration to the highest duty seen, bears fruit throughout the ages. And on a conviction of this sort, a great growth of human liberties leading to human obligations developed until its seed had reached all the world.

St. Quentin does not seem long dead in a generation whose patrician youths—noble by birth and by re-birth—have died, in legions innumerable, for the faith that was in them, to the glad martyr-cry "They shall not pass!"

It was at Amiens that young Quintinus preached and there that he was seized, by order of the Roman governor over the Belgæ. But for some reason he was taken to the town of Augusta Veromanduorum, forty-five miles east of Amiens, and there put to death with frightful tortures, after which his headless body was thrown into the Somme.

More than fifty years later, a Roman lady named Eusebia was miraculously (so the legend goes) directed by an angel to recover the remains of Quintinus and give them Christian burial. And as she approached on this pious errand, so happy was Quintinus that he raised his bones from the mud at the bottom of the Somme and caused them to float on the surface of the water.

To give them a fit resting place, Eusebia had a chapel erected outside the city walls, on a hill commanding the right bank of the Somme. And as time went on and the faith for which Quintinus died attracted more and more adherents, the chapel was replaced by a cathedral crowning the height whose slopes were gradually covered with houses. It was this group—church and dwellings—which first bore the name of St. Quentin, while the Roman city continued to call itself Augusta. In the ninth century St. Quentin's name had triumphed over Cæsar's, except that a small part including the old Roman quarter continued to call itself "the district of Augustus" until the times when the town was part of the dowry of Mary Queen of Scots.

Charlemagne aided his kinsman who was abbé of the church of St. Quentin (despoiled of its cathedral dignity in the sixth century when the bishop's seat was transferred to Noyon) to raise an imposing new edifice over the bones of St. Quentin. This was sacked and burned by the Normans before Charles the Simple bought them off; but the church of Charlemagne, restored and reconsecrated, seems to have served St. Quentin as a shrine until 1115, when a great Gothic church began to take shape there nearly a century before the majority of Gothic cathedrals in northern France were begun.

This church was centuries in building. It was begun under Louis the Fat (VI), who fought lustily to make a king of France more than the chief among many nobles; it was dedicated under Louis the Saint (IX), who won his name by steering a just and careful course which insured his realm the internal benefits of toleration and the peace and prosperity of foreign relations skilfully handled; and it was practically completed in the reign

of Louis the Fox (XI), who ascended the throne of a country still bleeding in every vein from the Hundred Years' War, and—in spite of all that he did for her firmer organization against the tendencies to anarchy—involved her in quarrels which kept her, for nearly three hundred years more, in warfare compared to which the armed efforts of England to put her Plantaganets on the French throne were like mere family squabbles.

The major part of all cathedral building was done before the beginning of the Hundred Years' War; but here and there work which that long struggle interrupted was finished after the English were driven out of the country; and St. Quentin is one of the places where this latter condition was true.

St. Quentin's church was begun at the front and seems to have proceeded slowly (probably for want of funds) during several generations, at the end of which time many great Gothic churches were well under way and were showing superb façades which made St. Quentin dissatisfied with hers. So she abandoned the front of her church and began to push work on the back—on the choir. It was this part that was dedicated in the presence of St. Louis after his return from the first of his two Crusades.

The nave was long in building; and never was quite completed. The church had the very rare feature of a double transept, which gave it the form not of a Roman but of a Greek cross. The first of these was built soon after the termination of the Hundred Years' War, and the second (which was very beautiful) in the latter years of that century (fifteenth).

It was before these transepts and the chapels of choir and nave were finished, that the church was the scene of certain gatherings so characteristic of the times and so

explanatory of much in the art of the Middle Ages that I think you will like to recall them in some detail.

They were dramatic spectacles, played in church where drama had its origin. On a vast stage erected in the choir, many hundreds of actors, secular and clerical, presented for the throngs packed into the unfinished nave and the high galleries, "The Mystery of the Passion of Monsieur Saint Quentin."

In the unabbreviated form, this drama contained 24,016 lines, and took four days to enact. A briefer version contained only 18,146 lines, and could be played in three days. The St. Quentin library contained manuscripts of both versions, when the Germans came in 1914; what has become of them, I do not know.

The preaching and martyrdom of St. Quentin was only the "point of departure" for the drama, which ranged all the known earth, and heaven and hell. The Emperor Diocletian, under whom St. Quentin had suffered martyrdom, was one of the personages of the play; and when cannon began to bark in Europe about the middle of the fourteenth century, Diocletian (that he might lack nothing of dreadfulness) clattered on the scene accompanied by his artillery.

That was the fashion of "mystery" plays: their purpose was to drive home religious instruction, but they did it by clothing themselves in very familiar, homely garb and keeping apace with the times they served. All relationships, even in Adam's time, were depicted as those the feudal ages knew: suzerains and vassals, barons and chevaliers, serfs and *vilains*. And the personages who peopled earth and heaven and hell were such as all the beholders saw daily: soldiers and vagabonds; thieves and drunkards; buffoons and fools; butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers; wenches and

shrews; and always the executioner, in his red and yellow costume, dreaded and loathed in reality but laughed at with impunity in a play.

There was a great deal to laugh at in those old plays which the church fostered; and much of it was comedy of sorts which would not "get by" anywhere in these days. But it served its time even as it suited its time. And it has served many other ages, too; for the sculpture of those days has come down to us, in considerable quantity; and the sculptors were influenced by mystery plays more than by any other form of art; and that art of caricature in which France is so easily supreme "was born on the wall of the cathedrals."

In the building of those cathedrals, whether they were soon completed or long in process, there were two distinct kinds of labour employed: skilled labour and labour directed by zeal rather than by special facility. The first phase of building, was, of course, the erection of the structure; the second was its decoration. For the first, there were always multitudes of workers who could aid the freemasons; there were the serfs of the church who gave compulsory service, and many free workers who gladly took advantage of the inducements —these included "board and keep," suspension of debt and also of any legal procedures that might be pending against them, and exemption from their feudal obligations. Nor was Heaven (it was believed) a whit behind bishops, lords, and judges in remitting—wherefor, kings and seigneurs, noble dames, and mitred prelates seized picks to hew foundations and offered themselves to be harnessed to stone-sledges or other conveyances for building materials.

Probably the labour of the great was not prolonged; but it served to get things a-going with an appearance of

universal zeal; and after that the skilled freemasons and their aids habituated to labour of some sort, went on with the uprearing of the great structure. Those freemasons were bands of highly skilled workers who went from place to place, wherever there was work to be done, and stayed as long as there was money to pay them.

When they were through, and had moved on to some other locality, there remained to be done the sculpture, the elaborate wood-carving, and the making of those painted glass windows which gave the interiors so much of their mystic glory. Volunteers were of no use here; and skill in all these arts commanded a high wage; so, all sorts of expedients were resorted to "for the building fund"—just as they are today. One way that much money was raised for St. Quentin's church, was to take his bones from place to place, even as far afield as Flanders, on a miracle-working tour. And the "representations" of St. Quentin martyred by Diocletian and his artillery, may have been given to help on the building fund as well as to instruct and amuse the multitudes. Also, there was an element of commercial sagacity in providing an attraction which drew thousands of spectators from far and near.

If, when you visit St. Quentin, you want to feel the spirit of her past, I suggest that you detach yourself (in whatever way your custom is) from the present and keep wandering back until you know you have "gone seven centuries." Then stop; and look about you.

Evening is coming on. The narrow tortuous streets are packed with people who jostle one another good-naturedly and keep moving, though they seem to be going nowhere in particular. The houses are tall,

timbered, with great gables and overhanging upper stories that seem almost to lean against their neighbours across the way. Not a great deal of light filters down between them to the street level where the many shops are. Wide open, from sunrise to sunset, those small shops stand—not only those which are mere selling booths and serve customers standing in the street, but those also where trades are plied and goods are made in full sight of all to insure against falsification or deception of any sort.

This street seems full of bakers, and that of armourers, and that of wool-weavers; for the "guilds" or trade-unions find strength and convenience in localizing their industries. They play a great part in the commune of St. Quentin—those corporations of skilled workers with their elected officers many of whom are also officials of the city. We have come a long way from the abject servitude of all workers in the centuries before the Crusades. Wages are good, now, and the cost of living is low. Liberties are many, and holidays are frequent, and there is no dearth of pleasantness for any one who is of a mind to do his work diligently and honestly and refrain from troubling his neighbours.

Tomorrow, for instance, the mystery of St. Quentin begins. Tonight there is to be a street parade in which all the hundreds of participants in the "mystery" will appear costumed for their parts. I trust you will not be shocked to see God leading the procession, rather closely followed by Diocletian and the artillery.

These people are getting a lot out of life. I wish we might go into more detail about it here. But we can linger only to remind ourselves that after eight centuries of struggle France has attained a kingly power sufficiently strong to insure a large degree of protection

to the masses of her people and not yet strong enough to crush them under royal autocracy. But evil days draw nigh! The Hundred Years' War is close upon us and with it misery from which it seems humanity can never rally.

Throughout that long struggle St. Quentin remained strongly anti-English, although it was her fate to fall under English domination in 1420, by the terms of the shameful treaty of Troyes. That domination was merely nominal, however; for the town was actually governed not by the English themselves but by their ally, the Duke of Burgundy, to whose sovereignty it was transferred in 1435 (after the expulsion of the English) along with those other towns of the Somme which Burgundy demanded, and received, as the price of peace with France.

While St. Quentin was being held for England by the Duke of Burgundy, the latter (Duke Philip the Good) wrote to the town authorities of St. Quentin a letter announcing the capture of Jeanne d'Arc at Compiègne and her imprisonment by Jean of Luxembourg in his castle at Beaurevoir, near St. Quentin. This letter was still, in 1914, in the archives of St. Quentin.

Forty-one years later, the successor of that Count of Luxembourg who was Jeanne's captor, had a certain grisly connection with St. Quentin. He had detached himself from the service of the Duke of Burgundy, his suzerain, and attached himself to Louis XI who made him Constable of France. In return for this aggrandizement, Luxembourg (who is best known as Count of Saint-Pol) aroused St. Quentin against Burgundy (no difficult task) and delivered it again to France. But, not satisfied with that, he drove out the royal governor of the city and seized St. Quentin for himself.

He had an idea that he could go on playing Burgundy and Burgundy's sovereign against each other for his own profit until he had made himself so rich and powerful that he could defy them both.

But he was overlooking that in human nature which leads men to bury, temporarily at least, very bitter dissensions and unite against a common enemy.

Louis and Charles hated and feared and envied each other. But that did not keep them from working together to crush St. Pol.

When St. Pol defied his king, he threw himself upon his old master (whom he had betrayed) for protection, trusting that Burgundy would forgive him in the hope of getting back St. Quentin. But Burgundy didn't! He sold St. Pol to Louis, the purchase price being St. Quentin! And Louis lost no time in depriving St. Pol of his head—on December nineteenth, 1475.

Little more than a year later, Charles the Bold of Burgundy was dead, and Louis sent an army to retake St. Quentin which opened its gates with acclamation.

Then began an era of peace and prosperity in which St. Quentin became the principal mart for the trade between France's wine-growing provinces and the Netherlands, and continued on an ever-increasing scale her manufacture of cloth.

The Hôtel-de-Ville, second in beauty to none in France except perhaps to that of Arras, was finished in 1509.

St. Quentin was favourable to the fostering of all the arts. French music was then the best in Europe, and St. Quentin had many composers of renown; most of them were choir-directors and organists at St. Quentin's church. She had artists and authors, too, and was a city of peace, plenty, and many pleasantnesses, when the Spaniards came to lay siege to her, in 1557.

This was in consequence of Burgundy's claim, which Spain had inherited through the marriage of Charles the Bold's grandson to the heiress of Ferdinand and Isabella. Charles V was the fruit of that union, and it was his son, Philip II who came to retake St. Quentin.

The battle which made it possible for Philip to bring his besieging army beneath the walls of St. Quentin, was fought on the tenth of August, the day sacred to St. Laurence who suffered martyrdom on a gridiron. To that saint the king of Spain vowed that if success attended his arms in the battle he would build a monastery in the form of a gridiron; and in fulfillment thereof he erected the Escurial, which became the burial place of the Spanish kings.

Flushed with pride in this saintly collaboration, Philip invested St. Quentin on August twentieth.

The defence was in the hands of Coligny; but he and all those who fought with him knew that they could hold no hope of victory but only, as an old town chronicle says, "the hope of delaying their glorious defeat."

Coligny declared that he would throw over the city walls into the very teeth of the enemy any one who even spoke of surrender.

For six days the heavy siege artillery of the Spanish pounded on the town walls, and on the seventh day eleven great breaches were made.

The inhabitants knew that with the forcing of one breach all was lost; but they continued to fight on, and at many points the soldiers and citizens who defended the ramparts stuck to their posts long after the enemy was behind them in the heart of the city.

Many were slain in the furious combat; many were put to death by the victorious Spaniards; and some managed to flee.

When night fell, there were left only the dead, the prisoners, the conquerors, and two others: a priest and one lay citizen.

The Spanish remained masters of St. Quentin for two years only. Then, by the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, it was returned to France and was soon thereafter made part of the dower-portion of the young widowed queen, Mary Stuart, who derived income from it until she died.

The frightful persecutions of the Inquisition in the Netherlands drove multitudes of the splendidly skilled Flemish weavers into France; and St. Quentin received a generous share. It was they who, toward the end of the sixteenth century, established at St. Quentin the weaving of fine linens which speedily became the town's principal manufacture.

Hatred of Spain was too strong at St. Quentin to permit the League to flourish there. Defenders of the Catholic faith formed a league of their own and swore to uphold "Christ and King." But when Henry IV came to St. Quentin in 1590 (the year after his accession) he was received with an acclaim which seemed to lack nothing on account of his Protestantism.

In the next two centuries there is not much to record of St. Quentin—except that a gentleman of Vermandois who traced his descent on the distaff side to Charlemagne, established himself in high favour at Louis XIII's court and became the father of that Saint-Simon whose memoirs of Louis XIV's court and reign are so celebrated and so fascinating.

In 1669 a great fire destroyed the roof of the church and consumed the steeple or bell-tower, which could never be rebuilt because the vaulting had been so impaired.

The principal event of the eighteenth century, before

the Revolution, was the cutting of the canals to connect the Somme and the Oise, and the Somme and the Scheldt.

Persons not familar with France—hasty tourists and car-window observers—probably have little, if any, idea what part canals play in France.

Everyone thinks of canals as a prime feature of Holland. Many persons associate them with Belgium. But I believe the average person does not realize what a world all their own they constitute in France; how many phases of life they affect; how large and interesting a population is employed up and down those waterways which are as truly characteristic of France as her far-famed white roads.

Railways seem not to have diminished the service rendered by the network of canals and canalized rivers that covers France. But what it meant, before the days of rail transport, to send unending cargoes from Lille to Marseilles without trans-shipment, may be imagined.

St. Quentin occupied a strategic position at the junction uniting the Somme, the Oise, and the Scheldt. And the commercial advantage this gave her was immense.

While her industries and her commerce were flourishing, St. Quentin was also producing a great number of men distinguished in letters and in the arts. Charlevoix, the courageous Jesuit missionary and voluminous writer of history, was one. And best known of all was the inimitable pastelist Quentin-Maurice de la Tour who founded in his native place a free school of art and left it a great number of his magnificent pastels.

The Revolution wrought no horrors at St. Quentin, except in the frenzied destruction of churches. No

lives were sacrificed there; though two natives of St. Quentin perished at Paris during the Terror.

The history of the town since the Revolution is largely an industrial history, and not always a happy one; because the introduction of machinery and the substitution of huge factories for small home industries brought with it a train of misery and dwindling efficiency and pauperism and diminished vital forces, from which the sturdy Picards righted themselves slowly and only measurably at best.

In 1814 St. Quentin was occupied by the Russians, and in 1815 by the Prussians.

XIII

VALENCIENNES

THERE is probably no other city in France, except Paris, whose name is so frequently on lips throughout Christendom as Valenciennes. Yet the lace that trims so much that millions of us wear all along our way, from the layette to our last and most sedate finery, is no longer made (except in negligible quantities) in the city whose name it bears.

The "real" Valenciennes lace is (or was!) made in many Belgian cities—notably at Bruges and Ghent and Ypres—and the machine-made imitations are produced here, there, and everywhere.

But if one loved (as I did) to loiter along quiet old streets, where almost every cottage doorway framed a picturesque, white-capped woman (usually old), with her lace pillow on her lap and her fingers flying amongst innumerable dangling bobbins, no busier than her sociable tongue, and to linger beside some specially genial one for a chat, a purchase, and perchance a bit of local information or a bidding within doors to see something of interest—if one liked these things and hoped to pursue them at Valenciennes—she was destined to disappointment.

For the city which gave its name to a lace only less cobwebby than that of Malines is now a miniature

and much cleaner Pittsburg; its location in the midst of vast coal-fields caused it to become not only a mining centre, but the seat of innumerable forges, foundries, and other Vulcan-like industries. Also it was the chief sugar market in the north of France.

Valenciennes has for long time liked to think that it owed its foundation to the Roman Emperor Valentinian; but there is no proof of this. We do know, however, that the Merovingian kings had a castle there, and there held court of justice, as early as 693. The city was enfranchised in 1114 by Baldwin III, son of that Baldwin who played so great a part in the First Crusade and died in Asia. And a little later his son built a splendid new castle on the bank of the Scheldt as it meandered through the town.

That castle was the birth-place of Isabelle of Hainault, who married King Philippe-Auguste of France and became the grandmother of St. Louis; in it, also, that Baldwin first saw the light of day who was to become Emperor of Constantinople. And if Philippa of Hainault, wife of Edward III of England, heroine of the intercession in behalf of the burghers of Calais, was not born in the castle at Valenciennes, she certainly spent much time there before going to England as the bride of her great warrior-husband whom she so ardently adored. But I must go back a little!

In the chapter on Lille we shall recall some events of the reign of Jeanne, Countess of Flanders.

Jeanne was the elder of Baldwin's two daughters. She left no children, so her inheritance passed to her sister Marguerite.

Marguerite had been twice married—first to Bouchard d'Avesnes, by whom she had two sons; and then to William de Dampierre, by whom she had three sons.

For these latter, Marguerite had a preference so strong that in their favour she wished to disinherit her eldest born. But her sovereign liege, Saint Louis, King of France, intervened against such injustice and decreed that she might leave Flanders to the sons of her second marriage, but must bequeath Hainault to the sons of her first alliance.

But Marguerite was so loath to give anything at all to the offspring of that union she had misliked, that she conspired with Charles of Anjou to make him master in Hainault; and in 1254, accompanied by Charles and a large army, she entered the province of Hainault and "began putting to fire and sword all those places where she met obstacles to her intention; and ordering off all those heads which were not willing to bow before the foreign prince she assumed to impose upon the country."

It was then [wrote Edward Le Glay, a Hainault historian of last century] that the people of Valenciennes gave an example of independence probably unprecedented in the annals of the Middle Ages, and which might be gravely doubted if it were not told by a contemporary of Marguerite —indeed, by one of her own subjects.

Almost the entire province, yielding to stern necessity, had submitted to the decision of the irate sovereign lady; but Valenciennes held out.

At the approach of Marguerite and Charles, the ramparts were strengthened, defence towers were built, and the fortified buildings outside the walls were destroyed so that the enemy could not establish himself therein. Finally, extensive preparations for provisioning the city during a siege were made by drawing upon the country thereabouts for its supplies.

These preparations were scarcely completed when a

herald-at-arms of the Countess Marguerite arrived before Valenciennes carrying a letter addressed by the princess to the city magistrates. Marguerite urged them to recognize Charles of Anjou as their legitimate seigneur and to open to him the gates of the town, warning them that in any case she would enter, whether they so willed or no.

The magistrates did not permit themselves to be intimidated by this threat and, after holding council, they replied that if the Countess of Flanders and of Hainault had presented herself as befitted the sovereign of the country, she would have been received with respect and eagerness; but, as she marched at the head of an army against her subjects and ravaged the country she ought to protect, they considered her a traitress to the country, a tyrant and plunderer, and were resolved to keep their gates closed against her and to resist to their uttermost her unjust demands.

This reply enraged Marguerite and Charles of Anjou, who immediately betook themselves with all their force against Valenciennes to besiege it.

In twelve days, five assaults were made; the townsfolk defended themselves each time with so much courage that the attacking force saw its numbers steadily diminish and its fury vainly spent. Indeed, the engines of war on the ramparts fairly rained death down upon them; while the besieged, on the contrary, prouder and more defiant every day, appeared innumerable as they swarmed on the defence platforms of the walls.

The countess and her ally, despairing of taking a city which resisted with so much spirit, contented themselves with investing it—hoping that when they were in possession of all the rest of the province, Valenciennes would more easily put itself also in submission to them.

When all the other towns were conquered, they returned to Valenciennes. The townsfolk showed themselves more obstinate than ever, and the siege recommenced with renewed fury. For three days the place was violently

assailed by the gates to Cambrai (on the west) and to Mons (on the north). Each side lost very heavily, but the advantage remained with the besieged.

The plan of attack was then changed. The enemy concentrated all his efforts on the side of the Porte Cardon where they succeeded in scaling the walls with the aid of ropes and ladders. It was the dinner hour; but the noise of the irruption brought the townsfolk pouring from their dwellings; they hurled themselves upon their invaders, drove them back to the place where they had entered, and after a frightful battle remained masters of the situation.

The next day Marguerite offered to negotiate terms, and named a place where she would meet their envoys. But the people of Valenciennes refused, saying that they no longer regarded Marguerite as their mistress, but as an enemy.

The princess again wrote, the next day, that if the people of Valenciennes wished to give her hostages for her safety, she would come, herself, into their town to treat with the magistrates.

To this they agreed· but when the countess entered the walls, the townsfolk did not go to meet her, as the custom was; instead, the magistrates awaited her at the door of the Town Hall, not deigning to go further.

"We do not understand," said Marguerite, approaching them, "why you, who are charged with executing our orders in the city of Valenciennes, hold yourselves in rebellion against us, your sovereign. You close against us our own gates, you kill our men, you cause us a thousand evils and damages; and while all the rest of Hainault recognizes our authority, receives us in honour and reverence, we find you rebels. It seems to us very strange!"

The provost, Eloi Minave, answered her in the name and in the presence of all the townsfolk assembled: "Madame, you say that you have come to your city of Valenciennes and that we have closed your gates against you; you further say that you are our countess and rightful sovereign, and

that we have killed your men and caused you a thousand vexations; finally you aver that Hainault has submitted to you of its free will.

"I will reply that neither the city of Valenciennes, nor its gates, nor its ramparts, are your property. We thoroughly understand that we are obliged to pay annually to our count a certain sum of money, in consideration of which he is obliged, by his oath, to protect and defend our town; but, this agreement fulfilled, no one can demand more; you yourself have sworn to this on the holy Gospel of God.

"As to your second claim, that you are our countess and the natural sovereign of Hainault, we shall recognize it as just if it be true that tyrants deserve the name of rightful sovereigns; but the scholars and men of letters have taught us that there is a great difference between the rightful lord of a country and one who tyranizes over it.

"Madame, we have met with that from you which constitutes tyranny, and it is for that that the city of Valenciennes has closed its gates against you; it is for that that we have put to death your men who are in our eyes the instruments of oppression.

"You say, finally, that the entire province has received you with joy. Each town having its own laws and liberties, it is not for us to follow the example of the others, but to give them one. Therefore, if the others have done wrong, we do not intend to imitate them.

"Be assured that we fear neither you nor Charles of Anjou. Amply provisioned to sustain a siege, we are resolved to die to the last man rather than permit the violation of our rights!"

When the provost had concluded, he turned towards those with him to ask if they had approved what he said.

"Well said! Well said!" they cried.

"Madame, this is the time to treat with us," Eloi Minave went on; "make known your propositions here before all assembled."

The countess wished to go into the Town Hall to set forth her terms.

"Never!" said the provost, stopping her. "This affair shall be settled only in the presence of the people it concerns."

Marguerite had with her a Parisian lawyer whom she delegated to plead her case.

After having heard him, Eloi Minave took counsel of his fellow citizens, and answered for them all that they would far rather die than consent to this odious disinheritance of their rightful count, Jean d'Avesnes. All that they would do to settle this matter would be to permit Charles of Anjou to act as their count until the death of Marguerite. After that, her son must come into his own.

It seemed advisable to the countess and the French prince to content themselves with this arrangement; so they subscribed to all the conditions imposed by the magistrates and the people, swore to uphold the rights of the citizens, and Charles established himself at Valenciennes —where he did not remain long. Because the Emperor, brother-in-law of Jean d'Avesnes, having taken up the quarrel in his behalf, advanced towards Valenciennes.

At his approach, Charles, who had with him only six thousand men and could not count upon the help of the townsfolk, wisely withdrew from Hainault, of which province Jean d'Avesnes was soon declared ruler.

I don't know how good a ruler Jean was. But his son and successor had some of the tyrannical propensities of Marguerite, his grandmother; and the people of Valenciennes repudiated his authority until he mended his ways to their satisfaction.

Either he mended them wondrous well, or he was a good father in spite of his being a poor ruler, or else his son became a good man in spite of having had a bad father.

At any rate, William, his heir and successor, was an exceptionally just and worthy man whose virtues were memorialized in many interesting ways.

Before going further into the story of William's reign, I would like to comment, here, on an incident of his installation. This exemplifies a Valenciennes custom which is not only interesting but deeply significant of the spirit that ruled mediæval towns.

The new Count, on arriving in his capital (Valenciennes), betook himself to the abbey-church of Saint-Jean, kissed the cross presented him by the abbé, took the oath on the holy Gospel, and received that of the city's chief magistrate in return. Later, the new seigneur repeated his oath, in the presence of a great concourse of citizens in the Grande Place. When he had done this latter, any free man who aspired to citizenship in Valenciennes and who was able to fulfil the conditions thereof, was brought to the same place, before the Town Hall, and there, his eyes uplifted, he cried out: "That oath which the Count has taken to maintain peace, I also will keep, so help me God!"

I cannot help wishing, when I read of such practices, that we had in our modern city life more customs and ceremonials which emphasize the proud dignity and solemn responsibility of citizenship, and the right relationship between governors and those they govern for.

William was Count not only of Hainault but also of Holland and Zealand and lord of Friesland. He was very rich, and his wife was a sister of Philip of Valois, who became King of France in 1328, on the extinction of the direct Capetian line, when Charles IV died without male issue.

It was before this happened, though, that there came

to Valenciennes Charles IV's sister, Isabella, Queen of England. Isabella was the daughter of a king who married a queen in her own right—Queen Jane of Navarre. Three of Isabella's brothers sat successively on the throne of France. Isabella was the wife of a king, and the mother of a king. But in spite of all these royal connections she was extremely "common" in her misdemeanours. She quitted England on the pretext of appealing to her brother Charles against the ill-treatment her husband accorded her. But her real intent was to conspire against her husband's crown. Soon she got her son, Edward, Prince of Wales, —then a lad of not quite thirteen—into France, on a pretext; and there she kept him, in defiance of his father, until her conduct so disgusted her brother that he "commanded her to leave his kingdom immediately, or he would make her leave it with shame."

So Isabella left Paris, and made all possible haste to get beyond the borders of France. With her were her infamous paramour, Roger Mortimer, and her son who was to play so great a rôle in history as Edward III.

The Countess of Hainault was Isabella's cousin, and it was the court at Valenciennes that the royal "undesirable" had as her objective.

Now, Isabella was fair to look upon, and well dowered with persuasive charms. Her first refuge in Hainault was in the house of a poor knight who was far from able to receive so much royalty, but did the best he could.

Her presence became known to the young brother of Count William, who was "panting for glory like a knight-errant." In his ardent mind it stood to reason that a beautiful queen in distress was also a good queen and a lady right worthy of succour.

So this "panting" young adventurer of romance, Sir John of Hainault, leaped to his saddle and set out from Valenciennes to lay his service at the fair Queen's feet.

Isabella told him all her troubles. She wept, and he wept with her. Then he offered to die for her, and she "would have cast herself at his feet; but he, gallantly interposing, caught her in his arms and said: 'God forbid that the Queen of England should do such a thing! Madame, be of good comfort to yourself and company, for I will keep my promise; and you shall come and see my brother and the Countess, his wife, and all their fine children who will be rejoiced to see you, for I have heard them say so.' "

Isabella thanked him, and promised to put the kingdom of England under his management—which was handsome of her, inasmuch as the kingdom of England was not hers to bestow.

Then she mounted her horse and set off, with her companions, for Valenciennes, where she was warmly received, and many great feasts were given in her honour during the eight days that she remained. From there she set forth for England where, within a twelvemonth, she succeeded in deposing her husband, getting her son crowned, and having her husband foully done to death in his prison castle, Berkeley.

Her devoted young knight was at her side during many of these events, and his admiration seems to have been undiminished.

The young Edward was crowned in Westminster on Christmas Day, 1326. He was just entered upon his fifteenth year. On the 22d of the next September his father was murdered. Sir John of Hainault must have returned home before the regicide. For it was

in August, the month preceding the Berkeley crime, that representatives of Isabella and her son came to Valenciennes to further an alliance between the young King of England and one of Sir John's nieces.

Evidently Edward had specified "which one." She was Philippa, the second of four sisters, and named for her uncle Philippe who was soon to ascend the throne of France.

Philippa was married at Valenciennes to the King's proxy, in October, 1327, and reached London on December 23d, escorted by her uncle John at the head of a magnificent retinue. She was married to Edward, in person, at York, on January 24th. And soon thereafter her uncle John returned to Hainault. If he was disturbed by anything he heard in England about his niece's mother-in-law and his own dear lady, no record of his discomfiture has come down to us.

However, Edward III soon shook off the influence of his mother, and Philippa so completely escaped it that she was one of the best queens in history. England had many reasons to bless her.

Certainly her father gave her a beautiful example in sovereignty. In 1324, when a terrible fire destroyed many houses at Valenciennes, Count William ruled that, as the fire had started in the Mint, his property, he should reimburse out of his own means the townsfolk for all their losses.

Years later, a bailiff of a Holland village near Dordrecht, seized the cow of a poor peasant and would not return it. The peasant, in despair, determined to go all the long way to Valenciennes to tell his trouble to the Count. The Count summoned the bailiff, questioned him, ordered him to give back the cow and to pay a hundred crowns in gold.

"Are you satisfied?" asked Count William of the defrauded peasant.

"Yes, my lord," the peasant replied.

"Very well—but I am not satisfied, and neither is justice," said the Count. And, directing the bailiff to make his peace with God, he drew his own sword and cut off the head of the culpable official.

At that time the façade of the Town Hall was being restored, and there was cut for it, in white stone, the figure of a cow to recall that shining act of justice. For nearly three centuries thereafter, the first thing that every Hollander demanded to see on arriving at Valenciennes was "the cow of the good Count William."

The year after Count William's death (1338) there was born at Valenciennes to the court painter of Hainault a son destined to lay all the world, for ever after, immeasurably in his debt: Froissart, prince of court chroniclers.

Writing of the youth of Froissart at Valenciennes, Sir Walter Besant has this to say of the surroundings in which the future "gossip" of kings, princes, and potentates grew up:

> Valenciennes was then a city extremely rich in romantic associations. Not far from its walls was the western fringe of the great forest of Ardennes, sacred to the memory of Pepin, Charlemagne, Roland, and Ogier. Along the banks of the Scheldt stood one after the other, not then in ruins, but bright with banners, the gleam of armour, and the liveries of men-at-arms, castles whose seigneurs, now forgotten, were famous in their day for many a gallant feat of arms. The castle of Valenciennes itself was illustrious in the romance of Perceforest. There was born that most glorious and most luckless hero, Baldwin, first emperor of Constantinople. All the splendour of mediæval life was

to be seen in Froissart's native city: on the walls of the Salle le Comte—perhaps painted by his father—the arms and scutcheons beneath the banners and helmets of Luxembourg, Hainault, and Avesnes; the streets were crowded with knights and soldiers, priests, artisans, and merchants; the churches were rich with stained glass, delicate tracery, and precious carving; there were libraries full of richly illuminated manuscripts on which the boy could gaze with delight; every year there was the fête of the puy d'Amour de Valenciennes, at which he would hear the verses of the competing poets; there were festivals, masques, mummeries, and moralities. And, whatever there might be elsewhere, in this happy city there was only the pomp, and not the misery of war; the fields without were tilled, and the harvests reaped, in security; the workman within plied his craft unmolested, for good wage. But the eyes of the boy were turned upon the castle and not upon the town; it was the splendour of the knights which dazzled him, insomuch that he regarded and continued ever after to regard a prince gallant in the field, glittering of apparel, lavish of largesse, as almost a god.

When he was eighteen, Froissart went to England and remained five years—at the court of his princess, then Queen Isabella, who made him one of her secretaries. Later, on another long visit to England, he was secretary to the imprisoned French King, John, taken by the Black Prince at Poitiers.

He had a way of making personages tell him all they knew. And what the fourteenth century would have been to us without his voluminous notebooks, I do not like to imagine.

The prosperity of Valenciennes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was very great. The splendid tapestries and fabrics of silk, wool, and linen made there were sought far and wide. The merchants and

master craftsmen were so rich that they rivalled the great nobles; and the privileges of citizenship in Valenciennes were so many and so fine that "the title of citizen of Valenciennes was considered almost equal to a title of nobility." And it was no uncommon thing for glittering companies of kings and princes to sit at meat in the house of some rich and powerful burgher.

Among the laws and customs jealously observed by the citizens of Valenciennes was one of tearing down the house of an offender against the rights of a fellow-townsman—similar to the Lille practice of burning the house of a wrongdoer, but more rigorous even than that because the one convicted of offence at Valenciennes could not, as at Lille, avert the destruction of his property by making amends for his crime. Perhaps it was the action of Count William, touching the cow, that made the people of Valenciennes stand so stubbornly by the theory that restitution cannot expiate. Perhaps Count William, in making the dishonest bailiff pay the extreme penalty for his malfeasance, was no more than a true Valenciennois.

Another judicial custom which the people of Valenciennes adhered to for a long time, was that of permitting citizens to settle their quarrels with one another by fighting a duel.

In 1444 a certain citizen of Tournai, named Mahuot Cocquiel, after having killed a man named Philippe du Gardin, left Tournai and became a citizen of Valenciennes. Thither he was followed by Philippe's avenging kinsman, Jacotin Plouvier, who, calling Mahuot a murderer, challenged him to combat.

Philippe the Good, Duke of Burgundy and Count of Hainault, signified his wish to attend, and preparations went forward on an immense scale.

Tuesday, March 10, 1445, the Grande Place of Valenciennes was transformed into an arena or tilt-yard, about which a vast multitude of spectators was packed.

At nine o'clock the combatants were brought in. Each wore a suit of black leather

all in one piece, sewed from neck to feet; their heads were uncovered and shaved; their feet bare. With them were the fencing masters who had been assigned to them while they were in prison awaiting this trial, and who carried their shields and sticks. The shields were of willow wood covered with sheepskin, and were three feet long. The sticks were of medlar wood, three feet long, and sharpened at both ends.

Jacotin was called and entered first. He made the sign of the cross many times, then sat down on a chair covered with black cloth, at one end of the arena, near the church of Saint-Pierre. Mahuot came after; and, kneeling, kissed the earth, then seated himself at the other end of the arena, nearest the Belfry.

The town provost then entered the enclosure, and the combatants swore, each in his place, that their quarrel was a real one.

Then their suits were greased so that they would have more difficulty in holding one another. And there were fetched two silver cups of spices for restoratives, and in two other cups ashes to rub on the combatants' hands.

When all was done according to the specifications of the law, the provost threw down the glove that was the gage of battle, and cried three times: "Do your duty!"

At that moment a frightful scene began, the horrible details of which I shall not relate at length, as I find them. But Jacotin, the accuser, threw Mahuot to the ground, bit off his ears, rubbed gravel in his eyes, and otherwise so punished him that the Duke of Burgundy, who was watching the struggle from the provost's

house, besought the latter to stop it. But the provost replied that the law would not permit intervention. So Jacotin, deaf to the entreaties of his fallen foe, went on. He broke Mahuot's arms and spinal column; he tore out the wretched man's eyes and filled the cavities with sand; Mahuot declared himself beaten, confessed the murder, and begged for mercy.

"My lord of Burgundy!" the tortured man cried, "Have pity! I served you well in your war against Ghent."

And again the Duke, heart-broken and weeping, sought to have the torment stopped and the man's life saved. But the provost declared that he must see the law carried out.

Then Jacotin finished his work with a few blows; and, seizing the bloody corpse by one limb, he dragged it off the field—then went to the church of Nôtre Dame la Grande "to thank God for the triumph of justice."

Mahuot, being thus "found guilty" of murder, was put upon a hurdle and dragged to the gallows where his poor corpse was left swinging in the March winds. But the Duke of Burgundy, outraged by the whole procedure, swore that he would abolish the barbarous custom of judicial duelling.

He was as good as his word. That was the last of it in the Low Countries.

Philip the Good was fond of Valenciennes, and so was his son, Charles the Bold. In 1473 Charles held at Valenciennes a meeting of the order of the Golden Fleece, whose membership embraced the greatest men in Europe and whose meetings were occasions of the utmost pageantry and magnificence.

When, after the death of Charles, Louis XI invaded

his domain, this is what happened at Valenciennes: while the herald of the French King was calling upon the magistrates to open their gates to Louis, the townsfolk dragged the herald's horse from the stable, slashed his hide with Burgundian crosses, and sent him back thus to carry their answer.

Mary of Burgundy wrote to the people of Valenciennes thanking them for their loyalty to Burgundy. And the fondness of her sovereign line for their Hainault capital extended through her puissant grandson, the Emperor Charles V. He made Valenciennes many visits, and was always received with extraordinary pomp and enthusiasm. The city was proud of his glory and of his triumphs, and loved to remember that it was to one of their citizens that Francis I surrendered his sword at Pavia.

Valenciennes was very rich, then, and able to indulge her sumptuous tastes in carnivals, pageantries, and the like. In 1547, at the feasts of Pentecost, there was given at Valenciennes a mystery play, *The Life, Death, and Passion of Our Lord*, which lasted for twenty-five days and drew an immense multitude from France, Flanders, and elsewhere.

The Reformation and the Spanish Inquisition added many bloody chapters to the history of Valenciennes.

When the city became French, in 1677, Louis XIV left it in undisturbed enjoyment of all its ancient and cherished laws and customs.

Then followed more than a century of pleasant, uneventful peace and prosperity which was expressed, for a wide world of admirers, in the paintings of Watteau, who, like Froissart, went from Valenciennes to depict the splendours of court life.

The Revolution fell upon Valenciennes with fury

and caused much destruction there. During the First Empire we hear little of it.

After Waterloo, the Dutch tried to take Valenciennes, but failed.

But the bitterest days in all her history were those that Valenciennes endured under the heel of the modern Hun.

XIV

LILLE

ONCE upon a time—a time when a great many things happened which have filled the story-books of all the Western World ever since—there was the grimmest kind of an old castle built on an islet formed by the meandering, sluggish branches of the River Deûle.

It really was no more than an immense donjon, or defence tower—that castle—with narrow slits or loop-holes, instead of windows, and very few comforts of any sort. But those were days when people thought very little about comfort—so continuously occupied were they with trying to keep alive.

In that grim donjon dwelt a beautiful and haughty princess named Mathilda. Her father was Baldwin, Count of Flanders, and she held her head very high indeed. Great, therefore, was her wrath when she learned that her hand had been asked in marriage by a "cheeky" young man named William the Bastard, who, though born "without benefit of clergy" and of a peasant girl mother, was recognized by the Duke of Normandy as his son and made his heir.

He was Mathilda's cousin, too, but Mathilda would have none of him, in any capacity, and she was furious over his insolence in presuming to ask her for his wife.

When William heard this, he mounted his horse—I suppose it was a "charger!"—and rode in hot haste to the grim castle where Mathilda sat among her demoiselles, embroidering and spinning. Some followers accompanied William as far as the drawbridge, but only so far.

Alone he clattered over it, beneath the portcullis, and into the castle yard, where he reined his panting steed, dismounted, and strode into the private apartments.

Straight to Mathilda's presence he made his way, seized her by her long tresses, dragged her across the room, wiped his feet—his muddy feet—upon her, and then, before any one had sufficiently recovered breath for remonstrance or resistance, William remounted his "charger" and rode away to Normandy.

"War to the death between the Count of Flanders and the brutal Norman seemed inevitable," the old chroniclers say. But, instead, Mathilda told her father she had changed her mind and William could have her. She "liked his nerve," as a modern Mathilda would say.

And so they were married, and lived more or less happily ever after, and William soon made it evident that he could conquer more than a pert princess—he conquered England, and made Mathilda a queen, and got himself for all time the designation of William the Conqueror.

I am not recommending this method of courtship. I am merely chronicling the episode because it is one of the first things we know about as having happened at Lille.

It was in the year wherein William conquered England that his father-in-law founded and built, near his

castle in the Deûle, the church and monastery of St. Peter, and around these there soon grew the town that was called l'Isle (the Isle), and gave us "lisle thread," before it became Lille.

Little by little, dwellings sprang up near the monastery and the church; an enclosure was built around them; and then the place found itself established with the triple symbols of the Middle Age city: fortifications, church, and town hall, for defence, for worship, and for municipal jurisdiction.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Flanders was ruled by a Countess Jeanne, daughter of that Count Baldwin who went off on the Fourth Crusade, got himself crowned emperor of the new Latin empire of Roumania, and never came home again, having been made prisoner after the battle of Adrianople by the King of the Bulgars.

Jeanne was a good sovereign, but her consort, Ferdinand of Portugal, "put her up to" a good many brash things (after an old, old fashion of consorts, royal, operatic, *et al.*) and among them the disavowal of allegiance to the French Crown, and the forming of a new alliance with that sorry specimen, King John of England.

Philippe-Auguste (of France) was of no mind to stand this defection, but he punished it after a fashion which has wrought too much dreadfulness in this poor old world: Ferdinand was in Lille; Philippe was aggrieved against Ferdinand; therefore Philippe marched with his army against Lille, took it, put it to fire and sword, reduced the city to ashes, and of those inhabitants he did not kill, sold many into slavery.

Lille was razed and desolated, but it was not dead,

though Philippe left it for such. Its citizens were not all destroyed, and those of them who set about the rebuilding of Lille were not so depleted of fighting force that they were not able to give Philippe a very lively time two years later, when he came with all the chivalry of France and fought the battle of Bouvines, close by Lille.

This time he took Ferdinand prisoner and haled him off to the tower of the Louvre, where he was kept for thirteen years.

Countess Jeanne managed rather better without her husband than with him, and reigned thereafter not only in peace but in beneficence. She did a great deal for the welfare of her subjects, and is credited with having laid the foundations for much of the prosperity that Lille enjoyed for centuries after her.

But this did not make them so loyal to her as they perhaps should have been. The story of what happened to her is one that has long interested me very much, and I can't resist the temptation to retell it here.

There are many versions of the story, and they vary in details; but probably none is better than that of Henri d'Oultreman, a native of Valenciennes in the seventeenth century, and a historian of his town. Of his work, another illustrious annalist of Valenciennes says that it is "full of justness and of erudition, and written in a style inimitable." Let us, then, quote from him.

Toward the year 1225 [he says] rumour commenced to circulate in France and the Low Countries that many knights who had accompanied the Emperor Baldwin on his wars in the Levant had slipped back into their countries and were there living in hiding and unrecognized, some in the

Franciscan order, and others in hermitages. Indeed, some persons, outdoing the others, declared that the Emperor himself, wearing the hooded cloak of a hermit, was living in a certain hermitage in Hainault—in the forest of Glanchon, which is near Mortaigne, four leagues from Valenciennes. This person went to beg at Mortaigne. A gentleman having met him, and imagined that he might be one of the knights-errant, plied him with a thousand foolish and impertinent questions, to all of which the beggar responded nothing. "But," persisted the gentleman, "may you not, perhaps, be the Emperor Baldwin?"

This extraordinary question seemed to dumfound the poor hermit, and caused him to change colour and, though he had seemed quite well and strong, he had, of a sudden, scarce strength to shake off the importunate one and regain his cabin.

The rumour spread that the Emperor was in retirement in the forest of Glanchon; and some gentlemen, who liked to fish in troubled waters and were, perhaps, dissatisfied with the government of the Countess Jeanne, found the hermit, persuaded him to disrobe, and pretended to find on his body many distinguishing marks proving that he was the Emperor. Also they gave him his cues for making his claim, and taught him many little secrets that the Emperor would be expected to know. The miserable creature permitted himself to be duped, and began to dupe others. He was taken first to Mortaigne, then to Tournai, and from there to Valenciennes. Everybody hastened thither to look at him, and most of them wept with joy to see their prince restored to his estates after misfortunes so many and so great.

He was received at Lille, Tournai, and elsewhere with incredible jubilation, but of all people those of Ghent and Bruges were the most foolish about him.

The Countess Jeanne was greatly troubled at this, and wisely decided that "the spindle should be unravelled not by force but by finesse."

She was then at Quesnoy where the King, Louis VIII, had sent three envoys to treat with her. She despatched some of her gentlemen to the impostor to beg him to come to Quesnoy, so that he might be recognized by her and by her court.

The pretender evaded this snare and refused to go, saying that he feared he would be poisoned.

Nevertheless, the towns opened their gates to him, and the nobility followed the multitudes.

The governor of Valenciennes, seeing the perplexity of his mistress, took some of his monks who had served in the wars of the Levant, and went with them to the Bishop of Senlis and from there to the King of France, assuring them by the testimony of the monks that the Emperor was dead and that the pretender was not Baldwin.

The matter was, however, not easily put down, and King Louis, as sovereign lord of Flanders, went in person to Péronne and ordered the pretender to appear there before him. The latter had the audacity to go. And there, before the assembly of bishops and nobles, he was questioned by the Bishop of Senlis.

Of course, he could not satisfy any one of the validity of his claim. So he stole away, under cover of night, taking with him money and jewels that had been entrusted to him by those he had imposed upon.

King Louis had him sought; and he was discovered in the village of Rougemont, in Burgundy. There it was learned that he called himself Bertrand and that he was a native of Rains. In his youth he had been a juggler and village fiddler.

Brought back to Flanders and taken before the Countess Jeanne, he had a judicial trial, confessed his crime, and according to some accounts was broken on the wheel.

According to another version of the tale, the story that he told his dupes was this:

He said that the Bulgars had made him prisoner, and that a Bulgarian princess had offered to contrive his escape if he would take her with him. He accepted the offer of the enamoured lady, and got away, hoping to "lose her" on the far outside.

But she wasn't to be lost! And after a while, maddened by her leechlike attentions, he poisoned her. Then, remorseful, he sought to go to Rome to ask the Pope what he should do to expiate his crime.

But he was captured by brigands, sold into slavery, and passed many dreadful years before he was "bought off" by some compassionate merchants. Then he went to Rome and was told to expiate his sin by living out the rest of his days in solitude and prayer, undiscovered to his kindred.

This version says that Jeanne caused the impostor to be hung, in chains, on a high gibbet, between two hounds, and left hanging for the crows to eat.

Nevertheless, many persons believed, and continued to believe for long years thereafter, that it was her father that Jeanne had hung. And the episode gave rise to a multitude of curious tales and superstitions which flooded Europe for a long while.

The story belongs to Lille no more than to other towns of old Flanders. But I tell it here because there was, in the archives of Lille when the barbarians came in 1914, the document, dated August 25, 1225, in which Jeanne pardoned the inhabitants of Lille for their disloyalty.

Like many, if not most, European cities, Lille owed a very great deal to the Crusades.

Vast numbers of men went marching off, zealously, to recover from the infidel the Holy Sepulchre; and a tragic proportion of them left their bones bleaching in strange, enemy lands. Women were made desolate and children fatherless, and the infidel kept the Holy Sepulchre. It must all have seemed to many sober persons an irreparable waste of life and energy. But it was the travail by which Europe entered upon a new life.

Those who came back from the East brought new ideas into Western Europe. The distances they had trod in holy zeal they soon began to retrace in mercantile enterprise.

So it came about that not only did merchants of Lille begin to find markets and to make purchases in Spain and Italy and Africa and Asia Minor, but many men from far foreign parts came frequently to Lille and Bruges and Ghent and Ypres, to buy extensively of the products of the wondrous Flemish looms.

Great fairs were held in all those towns, and to them came buyers and sellers from all the known earth.

Life was very colourful and high-flavoured with romance. Lille, like its neighbouring cities, was full of wealthy merchants, well-paid and skilful artisans and craftsmen, thriving shop-keepers, rich manufacturers. The organizations of the people, in the interest of protection and of pleasure and of profit, are a fascinating study.

For instance, there was among the Flemish merchants with international dealings a society of high commerce to which any man might belong who wished to abide by its rules of business honour, and profit by its power to punish irregularities.

If a foreigner refused to pay his debt to any member

of the league or sold him any goods not according to representations, or did him any sort of injustice, the wrongdoer was immediately boycotted by every member of the league, everywhere, and put "out of business," so to speak.

Likewise, the people of Lille had a way of punishing those of their own number who committed offences against citizens of Lille. One right of which they were very jealous was that of burning the dwelling and all the goods of one who had done wrong and would not make amends.

If a citizen felt aggrieved against another, he would complain to the town council, and the head alderman would go to the place where the alleged injury was committed and hold an inquiry.

If the complainant was found to be the aggressor or to have distorted the facts, he had to pay the costs and, if the affair was a grave one, he was punished for causing so much needless trouble.

(Our law-makers should take notice of that!)

But if the accused was found guilty, he was ordered to make redress. If he failed to do that within the period prescribed, the great bell of the belfry called all the citizens to arms and there was a vast assembling of all the trades and other organizations, all flying their banners as they marched to the Town Hall, where they were headed by mayor, aldermen, judges, all the magistracy of the city, and proceeded on their way, to the lugubrious tolling of the tocsin.

Silently and in good order [says an old account] the commune advanced to the place of execution, where it filled the office of executioner. The chief alderman, in a high voice, called one last time upon the culprit to redress his wrong; then, seizing a flaming torch, he set fire to the

shop or dwelling. In a moment, all that had belonged to the culprit was nothing but an enormous pyre, by the glow of which the procession resumed the way to the Town Hall.

This was harsh, and if the condemned was unable to make reparation within the given time, it may often have been unjust. But there is something good to think about in the solemnity with which a whole city avenged a wrong to one of its citizens. We do the same thing, in a way, when one of our courts issues a judgment. But we do not get the effect of uniting to punish an injustice done to one member of the body politic. It is there, but we don't bring out its "values."

Lille ceased to administer retribution after this manner in the fifteenth century. But all those ancient customs left their ineffaceable impress on the people of Lille who have always been celebrated for their probity and justice.

In the great days of "the splendid duchy" (Burgundy) Lille belonged to the Burgundian dukes and shared their opulence and magnificence. It was the favourite residence of Duke Philip the Good, who built a superb palace there and gave fêtes of unparalleled panoply in which the populace played a joyous part.

It was there that the Knights of the Golden Fleece often gathered in their efforts to revive chivalry. It was there that Philip received the fifty envoys sent by the last Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in the East, to implore Burgundy's aid against the Turks threatening Constantinople.

The people of Lille loved pageantry, and they had a Mardi Gras carnival whose sumptuousness was so great that when even the wealthy Lillois were unable to support its expense, the splendour-loving Burgun-

dian dukes made financial arrangements to sustain it out of the civic budget.

Lille had also its Court of Love, for Beauty and Poetry, and its tournaments and many other affairs to engage the pride and ambition and sustain the traditions of the city.

There are not fewer than a dozen stories I would like to tell about Lille in the past four centuries, but I must pass them all by except one: the defence of 1792.

It is one of the most glorious episodes of the history of Lille [says a Lille historian, writing in 1844], crowning worthily our past, and showing yet another time what is possible when love of hearth and home is joined to love of country.

The armies of Europe were hurled against the Revolution in France, and, as always, the north of France became the principal theatre of war; as always, Lille had to support the first and strongest strokes of the enemy.

On the 24th of September, Albert of Saxe-Coburg, commander of the Austrian army, come to take Marie Antoinette from prison and restore her crown, inaugurated the siege of Lille. He had a great force, and the city had only a feeble garrison.

On the morning of the 29th, all was ready for the attack. But before beginning it the Austrian commander sent one of his staff officers with a letter to the general at Lille, demanding the city's surrender. The Austrian, blindfolded, was conducted to headquarters, where the following reply was written and given to him:

Monsieur the Commanding General:

The garrison which I have the honour to command, and I, are resolved to find burial beneath the ruins of this place

rather than surrender it to our enemies, and the citizens, faithful as we to our oath of Liberty or Death, share our sentiments, and will uphold us to the uttermost.

The populace, knowing well the purport of the note and its sure result, accompanied the envoy to the gate, behaving with order and dignity, but crying a thousand times: "*Vive la liberté! Vive la nation!*"

A few moments later the frightful bombardment began. It continued almost uninterruptedly for nine days and nine nights. Four hundred and fifty homes and public edifices were totally destroyed. Seven hundred to eight hundred were riddled with cannon-balls. But the courageous inhabitants never lost their cool determination to die if they could not be free.

And after nine days and nights the Austrians abandoned the attempt, and retreated northward.

Lille had won a great victory, not for itself alone, but for the nation.

When the Teutons came in 1914, they found in the Grande Place of Lille a handsome monument to the defenders of 1792. Probably they laughed to think how times had changed.

But if the defenders of 1914 were not able to keep the enemy out of their city, they suffered the horrors of the late war in a manner worthy of their best traditions. A monument to them will rise in the Lille of tomorrow. And what tribute will it not evoke!

When the barbarians came in August, 1914, they found a city of about two hundred thousand inhabitants, a fortress of the first class, a great railway and canal or waterway centre, enormously rich and important in manufactures, the seat of a university and of numerous schools of the arts, professions and art-

crafts, and the home of one of the richest museums in France, and of a library of superlative value.

Lille was the headquarters of the first army corps and was defended by a girdle of more than twenty detached forts in a perimeter of about twenty miles.

Where Baldwin's castle stood is the citadel—the masterpiece of Vauban's military engineering. Of the church that Baldwin built, and the monastery, nothing remains, although the churches that his daughter, Mathilda, and her husband William the Conqueror built at Caen only a few years later are in perfect preservation.

Of the mediæval town so rich in sumptuous Flemish architecture, little survives. There is the Church of St. Maurice, built under the dukes of Burgundy, and the modern Hôtel de Ville preserves a portion of the palace of those dukes, and occupies the site of that dwelling where so many dazzling fêtes occurred.

Also there is one of the old towers of the mediæval fortifications. And as one threads his way out of the Place St. Martin, bordered with some of the oldest houses remaining in Lille, he may pass the Hospice Comtesse, which Jeanne founded after pardoning the people of Lille for acclaiming the old hermit in her stead.

To be sure, the existing building is a "modern" thing, seasoned by no more than five centuries, but the institution is going about its charitable business in an unbroken continuity of nearly seven hundred years.

Of the Spanish domination—Charles V, Philip II, and their successors—not many more traces survive. One is the Bourse, or Stock Exchange, begun under Philip IV, and overlooking the Grande Place.

When Louis XIV drove out the Spanish and reunited

Lille to France, the city erected a triumphal arch to him, spanning the gate to Paris. That was still there when the Germans came, with their Hapsburg allies, in 1914.

It was part of the southern enclosure of the city and remained so for nearly two centuries, during which Lille grew and grew until it had burst its old bounds. Then the ramparts on the south were the first to be removed, and on their broad emplacement was laid out the handsome Boulevard de la Liberté. (Perhaps there are some readers who, using every day of their lives the word "boulevard," do not chance to know what it means. It means a town rampart. And the reason we apply it to broad and stately streets is because the old French towns, when they razed their mediæval walls to enlarge their boundaries, covered the broad space formerly occupied by walls and surrounding moat with wide, tree-bordered pleasances, which they still call boulevards in memory of the ramparts which once stood there to breast the city's foes.)

Now, there is much more of Lille south of the Boulevard de la Liberté than north of it. And all around the outer edges of the new ramparts, inclosing an area fully three times that of the old town, there are grouped dependent communities, industrial and residential, whose life is practically one with that of Lille.

Roubaix and Turcoing, of which we hear so much in connection with Lille, are distant only six and seven miles, and the distance between is so built up that those two cities, lying on the Belgian frontier and containing more than two hundred thousand inhabitants, made, with Lille, one of the busiest manufacturing regions in Europe, and will, again, when they have recovered from their spoliation and depopulation.

Their industries are of many sorts, with spinning and weaving far in the lead. Lille has been for centuries a centre of the flax industry, making much fine table linen, damask and linen clothes, also linen thread for lace and for sewing.

Cotton spinning and wool weaving were also extensively carried on. And there were great government printing establishments, locomotive and bridge building works, and much manufacture of beet sugar.

The vicinity is a forest of tall smoke-stacks and quaint windmills. And criss-crossing in every direction are innumerable canals, aiding the railways in carrying the produce of the region to earth's uttermost parts.

The new parts of Lille are handsome, in the style of new Paris, wide tree-lined streets and avenues, many parks, gardens, and flowering squares, and a multitude of handsome dwellings and apartment houses.

Most of the educational institutions are in the new quarters south of the Boulevard de la Liberté. The new Palais des Beaux Arts is also south of the old ramparts.

It contains one of the richest collections of paintings in France, with innumerable examples of the art of Raphael, Ghirlandaio, Del Sarto, Franz Hals, Jordaens, Van Dyck, Rubens, Murillo, Jan Steen, Teniers, Veronese, Tintoretto, Guido Reni, Watteau, Lebrun, Ary Scheffer, David, Greuze, Corot, Rousseau, Millet, Bonheur, Carolus-Duran, and others far too many to mention. Part of the civic collection, yet kept intact as the donor had left it, is the Wicar collection, gathered by a painter, native of Lille, but long resident in Italy, who brought together nearly three thousand drawings by the world's greatest masters of painting.

Drawings were the special hobby of the Chevalier Wicar, and probably no other man ever owned so many "studies" of details in the world's masterpieces, made in the process of their elaboration.

But there is one feature of the Wicar collection which does not properly belong with the rest, yet is the most famous thing not in the Musée Wicar alone, but in all the Lille Palace of Arts. It is the head of a girl done in wax, with bust drapery in terra-cotta. It has been attributed to Raphael, but no one knows who made it or who the girl was. The thing is indefinably charming —lovely to live with. I am sorry that copies of it are not easily obtainable here, as they are in Europe.

The Municipal Library is housed in the Hôtel de Ville. It contains nearly seventy thousand volumes, including many rare editions and many manuscripts. The archives of the counts of Flanders and the later rulers of Lille comprise one hundred thousand original documents of historic importance, among them twenty thousand letters written or signed by kings of France, of England, emperors of Germany, popes, and innumerable personages famous in one way and another during eight or nine centuries.

Of all that I might further say about Lille I will omit mention, save for one name, Louis Pasteur.

Pasteur went to Lille in 1854 as professor of chemistry at Lille University and dean of the faculty of sciences.

While there he did much to revolutionize science and to aid industry and agriculture. It was while he was at Lille that he made some of his initial discoveries which put all the world and all posterity in his debt.

It was there that he grappled with the problems of anthrax and of chicken cholera, and found ways so to curb those diseases that Huxley estimated the

money-saving value of Pasteur's efforts in those directions alone as more than enough to indemnify France for the costs of the Franco-Prussian War! And to us it is no less great.

And it was from Lille that Pasteur went to Lyons to check those ravages among silkworms which were threatening the silk industry with extinction—until he saved it not for once, but for all time, with his science.

XV

SUNDRY SMALL PLACES

VILLERS-COTTERETS—LA FERTÉ-MILON—CRÉPY

LONG, long ago, when the first multitudes of jesting Tommies went tumbling over into France to wage a war whose animus many of them comprehended vaguely if at all, those who did not find themselves sent north to the vicinity of what they called "Wipers" (Ypres) were located in a sector between Compiègne and Château-Thierry, and their headquarters were at a place they called "Weal Cutlets" (Villers-Cotterets).

War began devouring the Tommies, almost from the day their first expeditionary force set foot on French soil; for them there were no months of "getting fit," far behind lines held for them by seasoned troops.

They had to do their bit at once. And they did it —jesting about "Wipers" and "Weal Cutlets," wondering at the strange customs in the strange land wherein they found themselves, but obedient unto death; not to their King, who meant little or nothing in their lives, nor to their government, which they had spent half their leisure deriding and abusing, but to an impulse they might not understand but could not deny: patriotism.

The simplest Tommy of Great Britain's army knows, now, why that war had to be fought and he had to fight in it.

He may not have cared much about making the world safe for democracy, but he cared a great deal about making it safe for his "missus" and the "kids"—and he learned what would happen to them if it weren't made safe.

To me the name of Villers-Cotterets will always evoke moving memories of the good-humoured Tommies who went swinging past me on many a day, singing *Tipperary*, smiling assurance, and realizing not a bit the frightfulness of the menace they were going to crush.

So hard it was, in that long, long ago, to believe in the hideousness of Germany's purpose, or in her grisly readiness to carry it out.

Villers-Cotterets, when I knew it, was a sizable town of some six thousand inhabitants. It is on the highway between Soissons and Paris, about fourteen miles south-west of Soissons and forty-seven miles north-west of Paris. The road, there, is (or was!) what the French call *pavé*, which means that it is laid with large blocks of rough stone similar to what we call "Belgian pavement."

This is excellent for horses dragging market carts heavily laden with sugar-beets or garden produce. But it is anathema to the motorist, and I am afraid we were never at our happiest when at or near "Weal Cutlets."

But I always liked to think of a strange-looking little boy who once played and dreamed the dreams of childhood, in that ancient town: a boy with dusky skin and kinky hair and thick lips—quite Afric, though

"in a lighter vein"—who went out into the great world to make his name synonymous with romance.

Alexandre Dumas, the elder, was born at Villers-Cotterets in 1802. His father's mother was a negress of unmixed descent.

There wasn't much of a sort to nourish romantic fancies, in Villers-Cotterets, when Dumas was a boy. But there were ghosts—wonderful ghosts—of other days. And where do you suppose they walked? In the poor-house!

For the building which had long since served as an asylum for the penniless poor of the district was once a splendid pleasure-house of kings. Francis I built it because he wanted a mansion in close proximity to the forest of Villers-Cotterets (which used to be called the Forest of Retz), famous in those days, and much later, as one of the best hunting preserves in France and for its great variety of game of every sort.

In that château Francis I gave magnificent fêtes for the Emperor Charles V, and all the gallantry of that splendour-loving day displayed itself there, where, in Dumas's boyhood, the paupers of Valois sat eating the bread of charity.

Local tradition says that Rabelais came there, and that ghosts of his strange jocosities linger in the shadows up among the rafters. Perhaps they told things, unheard by other ears, to the young Dumas!

At La Ferté-Milon, eight miles away, Racine was born. He left there at an early age, and seems not to have had much association with the district, but it honours his memory.

Perhaps the Germans, when they were there in 1914, destroyed the record of Racine's birth, which was piously treasured in the town archives.

And perhaps they also destroyed another document kept there, about which a story lingered that had made many generations chuckle at La Ferté-Milon. This is the story:

Once upon a time (April eleventh, 1611, to be exact) there arrived at the house of a notary of La Ferté-Milon, Arnould Cocault by name, a man who said he wanted to see the notary about having a lease made out.

Madame Cocault, to whom he stated his errand, said that the notary was at dinner and couldn't be disturbed; she directed the caller to sit on a bench and exercise his patience, and to his remonstrance she replied with humorous suggestiveness: "It is best to let Arnould dine."

Evidently she knew. So the caller resigned himself to wait. When Arnould had dined and was feeling consequently affable, he conducted his client to his study and made out the lease, which was for one of the royal properties in the neighbourhood.

When the terms and other details were all written out, the notary, supposing that his caller was a steward or some such employé, asked his name and warrant.

"Henry of Bourbon, first prince of the blood royal," answered the patient waiter. Whereupon, the notary threw himself at the feet of the prince and implored pardon.

"There's no harm done, my good man," Bourbon replied, and then, mimicking the sage tones of Madame, he added: "It is best to let Arnould dine."

It is easy to imagine the relish which Arnould's neighbours circulated this little tale, and the impressiveness with which the story has been told to young folks of the vicinity, these three hundred years, to remind them that one never knows whom he keeps waiting.

La Ferté-Milon is eight miles south of "Weal Cutlets," and about an equal distance west of the latter is an exceedingly interesting old town (not so much for what it is as for what it has been) called Crépy-en-Valois. I don't know what the Tommies called this place, but my guess is that they called it "Creepy."

Lots of "story-book" things of the sort which great romancers love have happened at Crépy, which got its name from the caves or crypts which were the dwellings of its inhabitants many, many centuries ago.

A wizard with a pen like that of Scott or Dumas could keep himself busy and his world of readers thrilled for a long time if he wrote nothing but romances founded on the actual happenings in that little town whose name is seldom heard, nowadays, far beyond its own confines.

I will make room, here, for just one episode at Crépy.

In 1180 Philippe of Alsace—that story-book gentleman par excellence, the same who made off with St. James's skull—was lord of Crépy. And in expiation of something he had done, or propitiation for something he meant to do, Philippe was building a church at Crépy.

And at that time he received a visit from Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom Count Philippe showed the plan of the new church.

"Under what special invocation will you place the new church?" Becket asked.

"I intend to dedicate it to the first martyr," Philippe replied.

"To him who was the first martyr, or to him who shall be the next?" Becket persisted.

I don't know what the Count said.

But the church was not yet finished when Becket

was murdered in his own cathedral, and canonized. And thereupon Philippe, recalling the conversation, dedicated his church to Saint Thomas of Canterbury.

BAPAUME—BÉTHUNE—LENS—MAUBEUGE

Bapaume is twelve miles south of Arras, on the main highway to Paris. More than a thousand years ago it was of sufficient importance to be part of the dowry that Charlemagne's grandson, Charles the Bald, gave to his daughter Judith when she married Baldwin of the Iron Arm.

Two centuries later the castle of Bapaume was the residence of an old baron who was very religious and very hospitable, and whose greatest treasure was his adored daughter, "whose innocence equalled her beauty," as an old tale puts it. But in the neighbourhood there was "a certain Béranger, whose crimes and boldness made him the terror of all the country-side."

One sad day Béranger came with his cut-throat band, besieged and took the castle and butchered the old baron and all his household save the maiden, who was made captive and destined by Béranger for shameful treatment.

(What brutal times those were in the Dark Ages of ten-hundred-and-something! Their records are scarcely surpassed by the records of Prussian *Kultur* nine centuries later.)

Only one person escaped from the castle at Bapaume: a minstrel. But he ran to tell the neighbours what had happened, and the lords of other castles thereabouts went in all haste and rescued the captive maid.

It was at Bapaume that King Philippe-Auguste of France was married to Isabelle of Hainault. And after

the celebrated battle of Bouvines was fought, and its Homeric scenes of hand-to-hand combat were over, it was to Bapaume that the victorious Philippe-Auguste sent many of his prisoners.

Then, in the early part of the fifteenth century, a weary horseman came clattering up to the drawbridge at one o'clock in the morning and gave the password which caused the bridge to be lowered and the portcullis lifted for him to enter. He was John, Duke of Burgundy—John the Fearless—and he had ridden in twenty-four hours the ninety miles from Paris, where he had murdered Louis of Orleans, brother of the King of France.

Bapaume was part of the Burgundian possessions, and when John had reached the refuge of its fortifications, he ordered the ringing of the Angelus or, as it was then called, the pardon. Soon afterwards, when he was emboldened to quit his refuge because it was so little likely that the mad King of France would, or could, do anything to avenge his brother's murder, Duke John presented Bapaume with a bell, on condition that it should always be rung at one hour after midnight.

Béthune is about seventeen miles north, by a little west, from Arras, on the same highway from Paris to Calais and Dunkerque on which Bapaume is. Lille is twenty-one miles north-east of Béthune—not as the crow flies but as a rather sinuous road runs. And Lens is about equidistant from Béthune and Arras, at the angle of a twenty-two-mile road which runs north-easterly from Arras and meets in a kind of crooked elbow at Lens.

Béthune was one of the most important strongholds of Artois. Its castle was a very redoubtable one, and the town (which was incorporated in 1210) was sur-

rounded by a wide, deep moat and high walls flanked with seven defence towers. Its seigneurs entitled themselves as such "by the grace of God," like the kings of France; and they coined money, stamped with their likenesses.

Like all towns thereabouts, Béthune sustained innumerable sieges. And in the course of four centuries it suffered as many great fires. So there wasn't much left to tell the tale of other days—only the fourteenth-century belfry and the Church of Saint-Vaast. Nor was it any longer celebrated, as of old, for its cheeses. But it was a busy manufacturing town, when the Huns came in 1914, with about fourteen thousand inhabitants engaged in a score of industries.

Lens was once a hunting preserve of Charles the Bald. It was part of the dowry of Isabelle of Hainault —when she married Philippe-Auguste; and her son, Louis VIII, gave it to his wife, Blanche of Castile, the mother of Saint Louis. It changed masters many times before it passed to the Hapsburgs and their Spanish descendants as a consequence of the marriage between Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian of Austria, and the double marriage of their children with the heirs of Ferdinand and Isabella.

Lens was a Spanish possession until 1648, when the Prince of Condé won it back for France in a battle against heavy odds.

It is in the centre of the coal-fields which occupy 200 square miles thereabouts. Before the war they employed 25,000 hands and yielded 15,000,000 tons of coal per annum. Lens had 28,000 inhabitants then (more than Arras, as many as Cambrai), and played an important part in the industrial life of France. Her capture was an immense advantage to the barbarians,

and a terrible loss to France. The mines of the district are so wrecked that it will require five years to make them workable again; and there is not a house left standing in the once-prosperous city.

Maubeuge, situated on both banks of the Sambre, just inside the border line between France and Belgium, twelve miles south of Mons, owes its origin to two monasteries founded there about 657 by Sainte Aldegonde.

One of these became so celebrated that it was reorganized in 967 by the Archbishop of Cologne, who was Emperor Otho's brother, into a house of canonesses, which received only women of the highest birth, able to show sixteen "quarterings" of noble descent, paternal and maternal.

When the office of abbess was vacant, it was necessary to get the King's permission to proceed with an election; three canonesses were chosen by the order, and the King appointed one of them to the office. It was a post of political, as well as ecclesiastical, importance; for the abbess was ruler of the town and of some near-by villages, and had the right to coin money for her dependencies.

Maubeuge was at one time very celebrated for her cloth-weaving; but some of her weavers began to mix "shoddy" with their products, and when this was discovered, many of the best markets in Europe were closed to all cloth from Maubeuge, and the industry declined.

The town has been besieged and burned so many times that few vestiges of its ancient glories remain.

MONTDIDIER—ROYE—NESLE

Montdidier is a quaint and ancient place, built on a hillside, like an amphitheatre or an Italian hill town.

Perhaps it was likeness to the latter which caused

Charlemagne to select it as the place of refuge and safe-keeping of Didier, King of the Lombards, when he had dethroned the latter in 774. The castle and the town which grew up about it took their name from the exiled king: Montdidier.

In 1199 Philippe-Auguste held court in the castle of Montdidier. But the year following he ordered it demolished, for fear the English might take it. At the same time, however, that he razed the fortress, he walled in the surrounding dwellings and shops, to which, four years previously, he had given a communal charter.

In the fourteenth century Montdidier, like all its neighbours, suffered many things in the wars of the Flemish communers against their French overlords, in particular, and feudalism in general. And in the fifteenth century it was often in the path of war between the French and Burgundians. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it suffered the fate of all French towns involved in the bitter quarrel about Spanish dominion.

The number of times Montdidier has been taken, sacked, and burned has scarcely been kept count of even by the town's own records and historians. But "in pursuing the long story of our history," says one of the latter, "we find the inhabitants giving, in divers circumstances, proofs of their remarkable courage and devotion to their city."

Nothing is left of the old castle which the Romans are said to have built, and which Philippe-Auguste brought down. There are two fifteenth-century churches. And the clock of the Hôtel de Ville, built in 1620, has a life-size figure which strikes the hours.

In the popular traditions of the town and the country

thereabouts, that figure on the belfry plays many a part. They call him Jean Duquesne.

The town owns some very fine old tapestries and a good collection of antiquities.

"Among our big and populous cities," proudly states an annalist of Montdidier, "there are few which have produced so many men distinguished in all sorts of service, as the modest little town of Montdidier." Of them all, the one whose fame has travelled farthest is Parmentier, who taught France to like potatoes.

Long after England (and Ireland!), Spain, Italy, and Belgium had adopted "tubers" as an article of food, the French people still looked askance at them. It was the scarcity of wheat and other bread-making grains, at the time of the French Revolution, which moved Parmentier to tremendous efforts to popularize the potato.

France has never set up the potato as the *sine qua non* that it is in many other countries. Meat is no more inevitably accompanied by potatoes in France than by any other vegetable—indeed, their custom of serving vegetables as a separate course often extends to potatoes, and it is no uncommon experience for the bewildered foreigner who has ordered "meat and potatoes" to have the meat served alone, and when he has eaten that (supposing the potatoes to have been forgotten or "all gone") to have a dish of deliciously cooked potatoes set before him as a distinct course.

There are things to be said for this practice as well as against it. And if the French do not, even now, make of the potato a staple, it isn't because they are not masters of multitudinous ways of cooking it deliciously.

Parmentier taught them many of those ways. I

don't know whether he is responsible for what we call "French fried potatoes." But I know that at fairs and other festal occasions in small French towns it is quite "the thing" to buy your lady friend a cornucopia of smoking-hot "fries," as we buy pop-corn and peanuts. Also, the shops are many in French towns where one can buy those golden dainties as they are skimmed from the copper cauldron of fat.

Well, this is a great deal about potatoes—but we have all been made to realize, lately, how important may be the work of teaching folk the food values in substitutes for bread.

There is (or was) a statue of Parmentier at Montdidier. There is another at Neuilly, a Paris suburb, where Parmentier made his first experiments in the cultivation of potatoes.

There was in France, long ago, a tiny province, called Santerre, triangular in shape and so small that from an elevation one could see it all. Montdidier occupied one angle of it, Péronne another, and Roye the third. The soil was so fertile and produced grain so abundantly, that the province was called the granary of Picardy.

Of Péronne I have already written. Roye, the third principal town of Santerre, was the old Roman town of Rhodium, situated at the junction of three Roman roads.

The place was so completely destroyed by the Normans in the ninth century that the survivors among its inhabitants did not rebuild on the identical site of the old town, but chose a location two and one-half miles distant, on the bank of the little River Avre, where there was a toll-bridge defending it.

This bridge was on the main road to Flanders, and while that meant trade for the rebuilt town, it meant

much warfare also, for it was in the track of all the armies marching north and south between France and Flanders

Philippe-Auguste bought it from the Count of Roye in 1205, strengthened the walls, augmented the fortifications and gave the town a charter.

In 1329 the Queen of France, who had been Jeanne of Burgundy, came to Roye on her way to Artois to take possession of that province, which she had inherited from her aunt, the Countess Mathilda. Queen Jeanne died at Roye and was buried there in the Church of Saint Florent, where her tomb was identified, after ages of oblivion, in 1786.

Times almost without number has the town been besieged and burned—while the French Queen slept on, secure in her forgotten resting-place.

Meanwhile Roye maintained its celebrated grain market, its industries of thread spinning and linen weaving; and in nearly every generation gave someone of note to the nation. It is twelve miles east and north of Montdidier on the main road from Paris through Compiègne to Cambrai and Lille; and, like Montdidier, it has (or had) about four thousand inhabitants.

Nesle, which is some six miles north-east of Roye, on the road to Ham, figures in one of the bloodiest pages of all the blood-reeking fifteenth century—the town's total destruction by Charles the Bold of Burgundy.

There was once in Paris a "Tour de Nesle," around which clustered hair-raising stories and about which Alexandre Dumas wrote a popular melodrama. What connection there may have been between the town and the tower I do not know.

CRÉCY AND AGINCOURT

Late in July, 1914, I found myself possessed by an idea that I would like to visit the battlefields of Crécy and Agincourt and the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

And, being in France on a long holiday, with no other purpose than the humouring of such impulses, I went.

It was about four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, July twenty-fifth, when—having made a brief stop in the hamlet of Crécy-en-Poithieu, chiefly for the inspection of the monument to King John of Bohemia—we drew up at the foot of the mound whereon stands the ancient cross commemorating the battle.

The day was a typical midsummer day as nearly all the world knows summer; great pastures of blue sky, with few flocks of little white clouds grazing; illimitable fields of golden grain rippling in a languorous southern breeze and disclosing flashes of poppy-red; scarce any sounds save the droning of insects or the drumming of field-nesting birds.

We climbed the little mound and overlooked as from a "crow's nest" the sea of waving grain. The windmill from which King Edward III directed the battle has recently succumbed to the wind and weather of six centuries, and nothing now remains on which the eyes of those two armies may have rested on that August day when one of the great battles of the world was fought there. Doubtless the harvest was well garnered —for it was August twenty-sixth, 1346—and the fields were cut to stubble.

A thunder-storm, history tells us, delayed the opening of the battle, and so drenched the bowstrings that the archers were seriously invalidated. But the sun

came out late in the afternoon (it was a Saturday, too!) and shone in the clean-washed sky with dazzling brilliance—full in the faces of King Philip's men. The fighting continued until nearly midnight. And when it was over, a third of the French army lay weltering in a torrential outpouring of the bluest blood in France.

It was a conflict of great import. For Edward III —grandson of a French king, great-grandson of Angevins and Normans—contended for his right to the French Crown against all the chivalry and all the feudal strength of France; and his army (outnumbered four to one) was made up of Welsh and Irish and descendants of the Saxons and Britons, as well as of Norman nobles. It was, really, the first expression of a nearly unified national consciousness: a conglomeration of racial strains making a concerted demand for recognition as a nation—the nation of Great Britain.

The Hundred Years' War, inaugurated, one may say, at Crécy, was not won by England; but thereby she became, in spite of her rulers to whom English was a strange tongue, and in spite of her different and antagonistic elements, a nation of intense national consciousness—distinctive, separate, amalgamate of many elements, but truly fused for national purposes.

We were thinking of this at Crécy—not as we should think of it if we were there now, but as people thought of such things then—and we tried, with very poor success, to imagine these golden fields trampled beneath the feet of two great armies, and piled with thick-fallen dead.

But who could think of blood and battle on such a summer Saturday afternoon in the year of grace 1914? And who could conceive that, at just this hour of the next Saturday afternoon, the tocsin would be ringing

all the length and breadth of France, to call millions of men to the bloodiest war in history?

So convinced were we that battles were a thing of the past, that we gave up trying to imagine them, and talked—rather—of the blind King of Bohemia, who couldn't keep out of excitement even when he was no longer able to see, but fought here, and died; and the Black Prince took (as one of the spoils of battle) the dead King's crest and motto—three feathers and the words *Ich dien* ("I serve")—which have served the Princes of Wales ever since.

"Somewhere in France," these years since our visit to Crécy, there has been a Prince of Wales, another Edward, whose personal belongings are all stamped with that insignia. He was on this front much of the time for more than four years. But he was there not, as so many of his ancestors were, disputing with France over provinces. He was there fighting with France for the great principles upon which the civilization of the future must rest.

We spent that night at Boulogne; and very early next morning were on our way back to Paris, by Agincourt.

The morning was a bit "misty, moisty"; even as we went inland there was that in the air which felt like spume on our faces.

Agincourt is off main-travelled roads, and I thought some of the folk, wending their way churchwards in their sober Sunday black, seemed a little bit amused —when we inquired of them our way—to think of three Americans who had nothing better to do than hunt through the country for a field where men had fought five hundred years ago.

But there was one little lad who seemed to com-

prehend. He, too, was on his way to church; but he immediately—on our questioning him—became our host in those parts, so to speak, as is the custom of the French people everywhere to the strangers within their gates; and with the utmost particularity, and the utmost intelligence, he directed us. His ease of manner was charming, and the kindliness of his courtesy was most endearing.

I have often thought of him since, and pondered what changes have been wrought in his life since that last peaceful Sunday any of us knew for years that seemed like centuries.

There isn't much to see at Agincourt, except the monument erected by latter-day descendants of many famous French families whose scions fell there fighting against "Harry Hotspur."

If the very name of Agincourt has conjured for you, since you were twelve or thereabouts, a whole world of drama and romance and colourful pageantry, you will understand what it meant to stand on that field. And if you're not that sort of person, there's nothing I could say to make you comprehend the pilgrim feeling.

We "picked up" the main highway again at St. Pol (which has since known much eventfulness) and before noon we were at Arras.

I don't remember why we didn't stay at Arras for luncheon. We wandered around for a while, loitered in the gardens before the Palace of Saint-Vaast, and went on to Cambrai for our mid-day meal.

It was nothing to do—twenty miles along a perfectly straight highway—I daresay we "did" it in half an hour, or little more.

A month later the barbarians came, took Cambrai, and moved on to Arras. For four years and a quarter,

their "line" ran from north-west to south-east across that pike, only a mile or two outside Arras. And in all that time they were not able to push it forward, nor the Allies to push it back.

So easy it was for us, on a Sunday morning in mid-summer, 1914, to lunch at Cambrai instead of at Arras! And soon thereafter "not all the King's horses and all the King's men" of Great Britain and her colonies and all the republican soldiers of France were able to go to Cambrai!

The mist of early morning had long since been dispelled by bright, warm sunshine. And in a golden glow we went on our care-free way that unforgettable Sunday: Cambrai for luncheon; St. Quentin, Laon, Soissons; Compiègne for dinner at the Rond-Royal Hotel on the edge of the forest (a favourite place, where we always felt much at home; it was Dr. Carrel's hospital for two years or more); then little, sleeping Senlis, and St. Denis with the tombs of the Kings of France; and Paris.

Almost, the Huns were on our heels!

DOUAI

Douai is twenty miles due south of Lille, and equidistant from Arras and Cambrai fifteen miles.

Douai has sometimes been called "the Athens of the North." The manners of its better-class citizens have long been distinguished by an "elegant urbanity" marked even in that vicinity of rich and beautiful cities which have vied with one another for many centuries in the cultivation of all that makes for art, learning, literature, good government, and general welfare.

So proud of their city have some annalists of Douai

been that they have sought to trace her origin back to fugitives from Troy—to give a sort of Homeric flavour, as it were, to Douai's beginnings.

But there is nothing that can be offered in evidence to support this. There isn't even any proof that Douai had a Gallo-Roman history.

No mention of the Castrum Duacum appears in any records earlier than the seventh century, and even at that "late" date, it does not seem to have been more than a fortified camp serving as protection for a near-by residence of the Merovingian kings.

Early in that century, however, the fort was commanded by a Frankish warrior recently converted to Christianity; he facilitated, all he could, the apostolic work of Saint Armand among the Belgic tribes—and, more than two centuries later, Saint Armand repaid, if not Adroald, his patron, Douai, his patron's place of residence.

For, when the Normans came (in 876) to destroy the celebrated abbey of Saint Armand—a few miles off—pious hands seized the bones of the saint and those of others buried with him in his abbey-church who had died martyrs to their faith, and carried them to the Church of Sainte Mary at Douai, where Saint Armand's relics became the object of pious worship which brought many miracle-seeking crowds to Douai and did much to set it in the way of great prosperity.

Douai was one of the first Flemish towns to be set on fire by the preaching of the First Crusade. Many chevaliers from thereabouts went on that gallant enterprise, whose rewards were so different from those expected, and thereafter the tales of their exploits and sufferings were told and retold by countless firesides, and enkindled the imaginations of many generations.

Like many of its neighbours, Douai waxed rich on the manufacture of cloth. Two English kings—Henry III and Edward II—gave special privileges and protection and immunities to merchants of Douai transacting business in Great Britain.

The looms of Douai made not only wool fabrics for clothing, but superb tapestries; and they seem to have produced velvets and plushes, also, because there is a town record that when King John of France was on a journey through Flanders in 1355 (the year before he was made captive at Poitiers) the people of Douai presented him with four pieces of plush which they had made.

Once upon a time, when Louis XI was endeavouring to despoil the inheritance of his lovely young god-daughter, Mary of Burgundy, he sent Gaspard de Coligny against Douai, with a strong force.

The city had very formidable walls, then, with more than twenty great defence towers perched atop of them, bristling against oncoming foes. The inhabitants felt so secure behind those walls that, although they knew Coligny was advancing, they went on with their celebration of one of the fêtes of which they were so fond, confident of their security.

But Coligny and his besiegers scaled the walls and were about to put the town to fire and sword, when something happened to stay them, and to give the merry-making citizens time to arm themselves for a successful defence, ending in the rout of the invaders.

After it was all over, and the people of Douai were wondering what miracle saved them, somebody remembered that Saint Maurand, one of the early martyrs of the vicinity, had come down from the sky to defend the city where his bones were treasured; and that it was his spear which drove off the besiegers.

The date was July seventh, 1480. And thereafter, on the Sunday nearest to July seventh, every year, Douai held high carnival in honour of that deliverance. But it was, strangely, not Maurand, the heavenly visitant, who was fêted, but a monster named Gayant and his monstrous family.

Gayant was made of wicker and was between twenty-five and thirty feet high. His head was wood, and according to local tradition the head he has been wearing these three hundred years was carved and painted by Rubens.

Gayant had a marvellous twelfth-century armour which must have belonged to some popular giant of an earlier pageant, and inside this coat of mail were concealed ten or twelve men who operated cords and pulleys to make Gayant seem animate. Mme. Gayant, who always accompanied her husband on his processions through the streets of Douai, was an imposing dame some twenty feet high, and grandly dressed.

With her were the three Gayant children, Jacot, Filliot, and Bin-bin, twelve to fifteen feet in stature and very frisky; the gambols of these huge *enfants* and the antics of the clown who accompanied them were the delight of youth in Douai for more than four hundred years.

Preceding the Gayant family was the fife and drum corps, playing a march called *L'air de Gayant*, which it was impossible for any native of Douai to hear without emotion—it was the folk-song par excellence of his people for many generations, and its strains evoked memories and traditions inestimably precious.

Douai had, aforetime, other pageants which people came miles to witness; but of them all only that of Gayant survived to our day. It vied with the proces-

sion of the terrible Tarasque at Tarascon as an interesting survival of "other times, other manners."

Little of old Douai remains except the fifteenth-century Hôtel de Ville, with its belfry, and the Arras and Valenciennes gates left standing when the town walls were torn down.

The museum has a very interesting collection of antiquities, sculpture, pictures. The library contains ninety thousand volumes and nearly two thousand manuscripts, many of them very rare. And the natural-history collection is one of the finest in France.

In 1610 an English translation of the Old Testament for Roman Catholics was made at Douai, and that, together with the English translation of the New Testament, done at Reims in 1582, constitutes what is commonly known as the Douai or Douay Bible.

XVI

CAMBRAI

MANY things, and varied, made Cambrai interesting to the leisurely sojourner in France, but they were not such things as attract the average tourist—so Cambrai was infrequently visited by foreigners of any nation, except those bent on business.

In cities of that size and sort, having no tourist trade to cater to, the hotels, shops, and restaurants had a very different air from that obtaining in "show places."

The hotels, for example, were of the "commercial traveller" kind. There were no small tables—only long, "general" ones, whereat everyone sat and joined in the talk or listened to it as his mood and capabilities allowed.

Most of "those present" were knights of the road, either buying or selling merchandise. They came frequently to that mart; they were no sightseers, pausing briefly and soon gone, never to return; the next time these gentlemen came they might take their patronage to a rival hostelry; therefore they were the recipients of much personal attention from *monsieur* their host and *madame* and *mademoiselle*.

We always had a keen relish for our participation on those occasions; as we did for our wayside luncheons with road-menders, shepherds, goose-girls, gipsies—

whoever came our way at sandwich time—and for our long and immensely informing conversations with shopkeepers of every conceivable sort.

Every one of them taught us something of that "soul of France" which has expressed itself in this war, to the reverent admiration of the whole civilized world and of all time to come.

Cambrai (which used to be called Kamerik when it was a Flemish city) was still—when the barbarians took it in August, 1914—celebrated for its weaving of very fine linen and cotton fabrics, to which it gave its name: cambric.

It was a linen-weaver of Cambrai, Jean Baptiste by name, who first spun flax threads so fine that sometimes 120 or more of them were woven into an inch of cambric or "batiste." Superfine cotton, as well as linen, is now called "cambric," after the town, or "batiste," after Jean Baptiste.

Buyers from all the world went there for those fabrics, and for woollens, too, and for beet sugar. The other industries had a more local character.

The city had about thirty thousand inhabitants when we knew it. But it was like most of the small cities of France, in that it gave its people a remarkably complete life.

Its educational advantages were many and diverse. It had a library of more than forty thousand volumes and many precious manuscripts. It had a museum of art and archæology. It had a branch of the Bank of France. It had a Chamber of Commerce and a board of trade-arbitrators. It had theatres and cafés and public gardens and fine promenades and beautiful boulevards.

Like nearly all old walled towns, it had made the

line of its former fortifications into a girdle of broad, tree-shaded avenues.

The French care infinitely for vistas, for perspective, and all their modern city-building has been done with great artistry of that sort, combined with and tempered by their reverent love for memorials of their past.

In taking down their old walls and filling up their old fosses, they have invariably preserved the ancient gates—which were nearly always beautiful.

French cities have the aid of many French traits to make them charming and interesting. Gardening is a passion in France. Public and private gardens alike express the intense love of the French for floriculture and for artistry in landscape gardening.

No other country in the world is so reverent of trees and expends such skill and so much money on their maintenance. Architecture suffers fewer tortures in France than in any other land. No other nation even approximates today the French genius for streets and public squares.

Fountains and shade-trees and gardens characterize nearly all French towns. And the national ardour for gardens is hard pressed for first place by the national ardour for monuments. The great deeds of the past and the doers of them are infinitely memorialized throughout France—and not her soldiers and their victories alone, nor those of her statesmen, but her poets and painters and scientists and philosophers and philanthropists.

All these traits have tended to make the intense civic pride and loyalty which have characterized the communes of France for centuries, express themselves in ways that delight the transient guest of those com-

munes, and make life very rich in pride and content for the succeeding generations of citizens.

Cambrai lies on the right bank of the Scheldt, twenty-three miles north of St. Quentin, sixteen miles south of Douai, and twenty miles south-east of Arras.

Its earliest history is enveloped in obscurity. Cæsar does not mention it in his *Commentaries;* but he may have known it as a sort of way station on the road between Bavai and that town near Arras where he once made his winter head-quarters.

We find nothing definite about it during the first centuries of our era, except that it was several times sacked by the somewhat decenter progenitors of the same barbarians who lately held it.

But there is one story of Cambrai in the year 511, the last of Clovis's life, that seems to me worth re-telling. There was at Cambrai a chieftain who was not loyal to the King and was only waiting a favourable opportunity to revolt. Clovis determined to make an example of this chief, who, besides his disloyalty to the new Frankish kingdom, had made himself odious to all the Franks (recently become Christian) by his shocking debauchery.

This man, whose name was Raghenaer, must have headed a very strong faction; for Clovis seems to have thought it wise not to proceed against him by force of arms alone, but to use bribery. So he "bought" Raghenaer's chief vassals with paltry presents of seeming value—bracelets and belts of imitation gold, and other tawdry trinkets; and when he drew near to Cambrai with his army, he entered without combat—thanks to the treason of the bedecked warriors.

Raghenaer, seeing himself abandoned, prepared to flee; but his own soldiers seized him and his brother,

tied their hands behind their backs, and haled them before Clovis. "Why hast thou dishonoured our race in permitting thyself to be chained?" Clovis demanded of him. "It would have been better to die!" And lifting his battle-axe, he brought it crashing down upon the captive's head, stretching Raghenaer dead at his feet.

Then he turned to Rikher, the latter's brother.

"And thou," he said to him, "why didst thou not aid thy brother to keep him from being chained?"

Without waiting for a response, he hurled Rikher also to earth with a stroke of his great axe.

Notwithstanding this display of his power and his determination, the warriors, who for cheap trinkets had deserted their chief, dared to complain to Clovis when they learned that their ornaments were brass.

"It is the gold deserved by one who breaks faith with his chief," Clovis told them. "Consider yourselves fortunate that I have spared your lives."

I hold no brief for Clovis, although I am mindful of some counts on which he merits respect and gratitude. It is hard to have a stomach for bribery, even unto good ends. But it is interesting to reflect that when brave and strong men stoop to it, they probably have, always, the same sort of contempt for their tools that Clovis had for his.

Clovis did a great deal for the Christian religion, at Cambrai as elsewhere. St. Vaast—to whom with St. Remi, he owed his conversion—was especially intrusted with the extension of the faith at Cambrai, and it was as a result of his labours that the first cathedral there was begun.

Clovis and his successors gave vast sums to this, and Charlemagne and his dynasty showed it no less favour.

The early kings seem to have spent a good deal of time at Cambrai; and it was there, for instance, that Louis the Debonair instituted some sage and much-needed reforms in the conduct of monasteries.

When his grandson, Charles the Fat, Emperor of Germany, was deposed after ruling for three years over the partially reunited empire of Charlemagne, Cambrai (in the new partition) passed under the suzerainty of the German king. And soon thereafter it became a little "sacerdotal fief," owing fealty to the Empire, but enjoying a considerable independence from other domination than that of the Church.

This was its situation in the springtide of 953, when word came to the little town that the Huns were coming.

Now Cambrai had twice been sacked by the Normans, and was very desirous of remaining in peace. But when have the Huns ever respected such wishes?

The bishop of Cambrai was Fulbert, "a prelate whose strong soul did not quake in the imminence of danger."

The city over which he ruled consisted of an assemblage of houses, in wood, stone, and mud, scattered around the churches and monasteries.

The Scheldt flowed below this agglomeration; and in the centre of the town was the castle, very strongly built of stone and flanked with square towers. This, with the cathedral, the Bishop's palace, and the abbey of St. Aubert, was protected by a strong bastioned wall. Everything else was outside of that enclosure.

When Fulbert heard that the Huns were coming, his first anxiety was not for his parishioners dwelling beyond the defences, but for the bones of one of his dead predecessors—which were interred in the church bearing that saint's name and situated outside the

walls, and which he prudently removed within the castle.

The siege commenced on April eighth. After a heroic resistance, the Bishop and his co-defenders had to abandon the "open" town, and retire behind the walls.

The Huns pillaged the abandoned houses, and then set fire to them.

Then, despairing of taking the citadel, they camped in the plains across the river.

One day their chief—making a sortie—was killed by a bow-man on the ramparts.

That infuriated them, and they hastened back to their old position beneath the walls, where they fought with new frightfulness—their special endeavour being to burn the cathedral by means of flaming projectiles. (How little the Huns changed in a thousand years!) But, thanks to the daring and devotion of a scholar named Sarrald, the fire which they succeeded in starting in the cathedral was put out.

Then they turned all their fury upon the Church of St. Geri, outside the walls, which, in spite of a courageous defence by its clergy and their vassals, the Huns completely gutted. Many monks and scholars perished in this defence. Those who survived the combat were shockingly martyred by the Huns.

When there remained not another person to massacre [I quote from the history of M. Edward Le Glay, written threescore and ten years ago], the barbarians despoiled the monastery and the church of their reliquaries, their treasures, their ornaments, after which they set fire to the episcopal canopy of St. Geri, and the flames devoured that ancient and venerable monument. The street was strewn with smoking débris; the molten lead from roofs flowed in long rivulets down the slope of the hill and overflowed the

streets and ditches below. And, by the red glare of this sinister holocaust, the Huns took themselves off, leading their captives and carrying an immense booty.

One could use this, without changing a word, to describe Hun activities on many a recent day!

Bishop Fulbert was succeeded by a man of a type which wrought much wretchedness in mediæval times and nowhere more than in ecclesiastical states or cities, the rich incomes of which induced their royal or imperial overlords to make "sudden bishops" out of sots, bastards, and profligates for whom a "living" must needs be found.

Fulbert's successor called himself Bérengaire, and he belonged in some way probably none too lawful to the family of the German Emperor Otho.

So Otho sent this person to Cambrai to be its bishop. His morals were wild and unregulated; he spoke—the old annals say—"with Germanic coarseness"; he had habits so foreign that his people could think him none other than an out-and-out barbarian. They loathed him instinctively, even before his arrogance and his persecutions justified that antipathy.

"Such was the state of affairs when, in the year 958, Cambrai was the theatre of a scene which should be considered the first move for communes in the north of France."

Bérengaire was in Germany, at the court of the Emperor, his kinsman—where he greatly preferred to be rather than at Cambrai with his strange "flock."

And, taking advantage of his absence, the flock, "united by a single thought," swore to hold the gates shut against him when he essayed to return.

He learned this, as he was journeying back. So he

hastened to the Emperor, and poured out to him his tale of woe.

The Emperor gave him a strong armed force to take back for the subjugation of his unloving flock. And, not satisfied with that, he besought another from his immediate liege, the Count of Flanders.

The people of Cambrai could do nothing against all this force; so they submitted, and let Bérengaire come in.

But his heart brooded on the idea of vengeance. And, biding his time, he sneaked armed men into the city and set these mercenaries suddenly upon the unprepared inhabitants, whom they chased through the streets like wild animals. Drunk with the smell of flowing blood, the Bishop's hirelings pursued their victims even into the Church of St. Géri, where the wretched fugitives had believed the rights of sanctuary would be respected. But the madmen dragged them to the very steps of the altars and there mutilated them horribly, cutting off the hands and feet of some, putting out the eyes of others, and branding many on the forehead with red-hot iron.

When this butchery was finished, the furious Bishop filled a chariot with arms and spoils taken from the townsfolk, and sent it as a trophy of his victory to his companions in debauchery who were gathered at one of his "pleasure-houses" not far from Cambrai.

Bérengaire soon received the chastisement for his crimes; and, if one may credit tradition, it was his conscience which became his executioner.

He was at Cologne. One night when he was lying, half awake, in his bed, the blessed Géri whose church he had so cruelly profaned, appeared to him, and after having reproached him for his crimes, struck him vigorously with

the crozier which he held in his hand. Bérengaire, aghast, raised himself up, crying, yelling, to his servants. A few days later, he died as a consequence of this terrible vision.

This episode is, as we have said, the earliest evidence of that new era which was coming in the struggle of a people for self-government.

The murder and destruction wrought by order of Bérengaire made the people of Cambrai determined that when they could, they would shake off the yoke of tyranny which imposed such a wolf upon them in the vestments of a spiritual shepherd.

But no occasion presented itself for more than a hundred years. They took advantage of the absence of their Bishop to organize a commune in 1076. But he, like Bérengaire, brought strong forces against them, and they had to surrender—for the time being—their hope.

Again in 1095 they tried. But the Emperor intervened, coming in person with a great army of German men-at-arms and bondmen of Lorraine and Saxony. His presence spread the utmost terror; women, young girls, and children fleeing from the brutality of his soldiery, took refuge in the churches.

The Emperor summoned the inhabitants to appear before him. They came, trembling, in fear of losing life or limb. He tore to shreds, before them, the "scrap of paper" whereon their charter was writ, and demanded of them their oath that they would never again seek their liberty.

Twenty years later they re-established their commune. And twice, after that, it was abolished. But finally they triumphed. And far and wide the commune of Cambrai was cited as a model of political

organization and independence. By its terms neither the Bishop nor the Emperor could impose a tax nor raise a tribute in the city, nor order out the militia, except in the interest of the commune, solely.

Cambrai was the only town under German domination in which a commune was ever established.

Of sieges and changing sovereignty it had its full share until near the close of the seventeenth century. But through all vicissitudes, the people remained essentially French in spirit, in sympathies, and in customs.

At one time during the Hundred Years' War an army of English, Flemings, Brabanters, and men of Hainault, numbering (Froissart says) eighty thousand, attacked Cambrai—which held out valiantly for Philip of Valois and for France.

In recognition of this heroic defence, the King confirmed and extended the city charter.

The panoply of Middle Age ceremonials was not lacking there, either.

When Isabeau of Bavaria made her pompous entry into France, coming as a bride, not as a ravager, but bringing with her evils that Attila might well have envied her, she seems to have come by the northern route, from Frankfort, rather than by the more obvious road through Strasbourg and Nancy; and she made her entry into France through Cambrai—then a fief of the French Crown. And after the battle of Rosbeck, wherein he defeated the Flemings under Artevelde, Charles VI made a triumphal entry into Cambrai; giving rich thank offerings to the cathedral and hanging up therein some of the standards he had taken from his arrogant and rebellious vassals.

Two years later he was again at Cambrai to attend a double wedding of great splendour. The contracting

parties included his cousins, the son and daughter of Philippe-le-Hardi, Duke of Burgundy and brother of King Charles's father, Charles V. This brother and sister wedded respectively the daughter and the son of Count William of Hainault.

The Burgundian part of this double alliance was the ranking part—although the Hainault brother and sister were also of the blood royal of France not much more remotely than their Burgundian mates—which would account for the ceremony taking place not in Valenciennes (twenty miles to north-east) but in Burgundy. But I am unable to conjecture why Cambrai should have been the scene of it rather than many another city of greater grandeur and closer association with Flanders and Burgundy.

However, at Cambrai it was; and the festivities lasted for a week and a day—jousts, tournaments, feasts, wine flowing from the public fountains, mythological personages stepping from mammoth pastries, angels coming down (on wires) to crown the bridal pairs, and all the other extravagances of the era. More than three thousand knights were in attendance, with their squires and suites; and the influx of sightseers was so enormous that six thousand tents had to be set up in the country 'round about Cambrai, for their accommodation.

Nearly a century later, Charles VI's grandson, Louis XI, came and helped himself to Cambrai when he heard that Charles the Bold, of Burgundy, was dead and his vast possessions were fallen into the gentle hands of a girlish heiress who could not defend them.

The governor Louis set over Cambrai to guard his interests was detested for his cruelties—which must have been excessive indeed, for they seem to have stirred

to remorse the peculiar conscience of Louis, and moved him to make two pilgrimages to Nôtre Dame de Cambrai where, as expiation for his crimes, he offered a crown of great value and renunciation of all his claims to Cambrai. This solemn ceremony occurred on the steps of the high altar of the cathedral—at a time when the Fox of France was haunted by the fear of his approaching death.

Louis, who did so much for France—who dealt feudalism its deathblow, and nationalized the nest of warring fiefs, and put the currency and banking on a sound basis, and established postal routes, and did many and many another thing for France's lasting good, was as destructive to her interests in his foreign policy as he was constructive in his internal rule.

By his attitude towards his young god-daughter and kinswoman, Mary of Burgundy, he more than nullified (in a sense) all the good he ever wrought for France. For, by so treating her that she was drawn into the Hapsburg alliance, he paved the way for two centuries of continuous war between France and the Spanish-Austrian Empire.

Mary and Maximilian had a son and a daughter. The son, Philip, married Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain (Catherine of Aragon was another daughter), and their daughter, Marguerite of Austria, married Ferdinand and Isabella's son and heir. He predeceased his parents, and the crown of Spain passed, through Johanna, to Philip. Their son, born at Ghent in 1500, became the great Emperor Charles V, to whom Spain came through his mother, Netherlands and much of what is now northern France through his grandmother, Mary of Burgundy, and the Austro-

German Empire through his father, the heir of Maximilian.

Thus was France hemmed in on every side by Hapsburg power and Hapsburg enmity—from which Louis XIV at last set her free, just two hundred years after Louis XI by his greed and trickery in foreign affairs imprisoned her in a ring of steel.

Everything that Louis XI forgot to do to involve France in abominable foreign complications was zealously achieved by his puerile son, Charles VIII, and his fatuous cousin, Louis XII. After a half century of these three reigns, it must have seemed that there was no foolhardy thing left for a king to do against the interests of France. Yet Francis I found otherwise!

In 1508 Louis XII betook himself to Cambrai and there met Cambrai's sovereign lord, the Emperor Maximilian, and sundry other persons who viewed with selfish alarm the ever-growing power of the Venetian republic, and were determined to crush it. To the treaty there signed, forming what is known in history as the League of Cambrai, Pope Julius II was a signatory—as well as Maximilian, Louis XII, and others.

Well! they didn't crush the Venetian republic. And soon the Venetians destroyed the League of Cambrai, and formed a Holy League for the purpose of driving the French out of Italy.

Then, twenty-one years later, Cambrai was the scene of another famous international pact, known as the Ladies' Peace (*la Paix des Dames*) because the two sovereigns concerned in it were represented by women —one by his mother and the other by his aunt.

It was an age of remarkable women in public affairs; and many of them left writings which have brought down to us the vigour and grace of their personalities.

The daughter of Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian is known in history as Margaret of Austria. She was betrothed, when she was only two years old, to the Dauphin of France, son of Louis XI, and after her lovely young mother's death the baby girl of three was sent into France to be brought up by her prospective sister-in-law, Anne of Beaujeau. This forceful woman should have succeeded to the crown of France, instead of her rickety young brother, Charles; instead, she governed for him as regent during his minority.

When he was old enough to marry, it became evident that his intended father-in-law, Maximilian, was contemplating a second union and had his eye upon the duchy of Brittany, which had just passed into the sole heritance of a young duchess, Anne.

Charles VIII wanted Brittany. And even more he wanted to keep the Hapsburg out of Brittany. So he married Anne, and sent Margaret packing back home.

Some time later she married the heir to the Spanish throne. He lived only a few months.

Her handsome brother, Philip, had very little comfort with his Spanish wife, Johanna, who was—in truth—mentally irresponsible; and upon Margaret devolved very largely the upbringing of his children, one of whom was the future Emperor, Charles V, and another was destined to be Queen of France.

Even after Charles V was declared to have attained his majority, he entrusted many of his cares of state to his aunt Margaret, and at all times left solely in her hands the government of the Netherlands—which then extended far down into what is now France.

The extent of Margaret's influence upon her world is difficult to overestimate. Through her father, her brother, and her nephew she was a power behind three

thrones; and as governor of the Netherlands she was virtually monarch over the most enterprising and most prosperous part of Europe.

She was one of the "dames" who made the peace of Cambrai.

The other was Louise of Savoy, mother of Francis I. This lady had a greater aptitude for statecraft than most of the men of her day, and a passion for exercising this ability. She was widowed while quite young; and the childlessness of Louis XII made her little boy the heir apparent to the throne of France. For years she sat on tenterhooks, guarding his prospects in ways possible to her, and praying—doubtless—when there was nothing else she could do; as, for instance, when old King Louis took to himself a sprightly young wife in the person of Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII of England.

But Mary was no more anxious to bring an heir to France than Louise of Savoy was to have her bring one. She had other purposes—had Mary!—than that of being regent of France. So she danced and dined her poor old lord into the grave that was yawning for him when he married her, and went to the altar soon afterwards, *with her hair down*, to wed Charles Brandon.

Louise's son was king, then. But Louise's difficulties were not over. She still had many a battle to fight in his behalf. And it was to patch up a peace between him and his conqueror, Charles V, that Louise journeyed to Cambrai, in 1529, to negotiate with Margaret as the Emperor's representative.

Never [says an old account] was brought together a more magnificent assembly of ecclesiastical dignitaries and noble personages than on this occasion. There were in Cambrai,

besides the two princesses, eight cardinals, ten archbishops, thirty-three bishops, four sovereign princes, seventy-two counts, and four hundred seigneurs of all degrees.

After the treaty was signed, Francis I came with his brilliant court to add a new splendour to this gathering.

After varying fortunes, Cambrai was definitely united to France by Louis XIV, in 1677. During the Revolution it suffered nothing from the armies of invasion, but the Terror was severe there, and the many remarkable ecclesiastical buildings, which were the town's chief pride and glory, were not only profaned but levelled to the dust.

The cathedral was one of the most remarkable monuments in the north of France. I cannot refrain from quoting this description of it:

> This magnificent structure was surrounded by a multitude of chapels filled with mausoleums, embellished by all that the art of the Middle Age could inspire of originality and sumptuousness. Specially admirable was its spire, all of stone, fretted like fine lace, which sprang from above a portal marvellously historic, to lose its topmost beauties among the fleecy clouds.

The fury of the French populace against the Church of Rome annihilated all this majesty and beauty (it was one of the few cathedrals destroyed) and many another sacred edifice in Cambrai besides. Even the bones of Fénelon were not spared.

Cambrai was a veritable nursery of prelates, its cathedral chapter was called "the seminary of bishops" and out of it proceeded four Popes, sixty-eight cardinals, and two hundred archbishops and bishops.

But of all this goodly company none has left a name

so illustrious as Fénelon, who was appointed Archbishop of Cambrai in 1695.

It was a time when religion was ultra-fashionable. Madame de Maintenon made it so—the austere woman who had graduated from the royal nursery for bastards at Versailles to the throne of France, whereon she sat regnant although uncrowned, and not even an acknowledged wife.

Through her influence, doubtless, François Fénelon was gazetted tutor to the seven-year-old Duke of Burgundy, eldest son of the Dauphin.

The particular performance which brought Fénelon this honour and responsibility—the education of a youth who would, presumably, govern France as its king—was, strangely enough, his *Treatise on the Education of Girls*, the first systematic attempt ever made to deal with that subject as a whole, and one which profoundly influenced the thought of France for a century.

To interest, instruct, and inspire his royal pupil, Fénelon wrote, in a style which he hoped would convey to youth the grandeur of antiquity that he so venerated, three books. The last and most celebrated of these is *Télémaque*, wherein the adventures of Ulysses' "son in search of a father" are made the basis of an idealistic Utopian treatise on kingship and government. The "great and holy maxim" that Fénelon endeavoured to keep before his pupil was that "kings exist for the sake of their subjects, not subjects for the sake of kings."

He seemed to feel the decline of absolutism, and to appreciate that by the time his pupil came to the throne of France a different sort of kingship would be demanded and must be supplied.

It is interesting to speculate on what might and

what might not have happened in France, a century later, if Fénelon's pupil had lived and reigned, and if Fénelon's influence over him had been undisturbed.

But Fénelon fell into deep disgrace. He espoused some ideas which proved very unpopular with the intensely self-conscious pietists who, following Madame de Maintenon's lead, dominated France. He thought, for instance, that it was better to contemplate the greatness and goodness of God, and humanity's need of Him, than to think so intensively as many persons did about their own relations with Him—their private "score," so to speak.

In consequence of these ideas, published in a book called *Maxims of the Saints*, he was separated from the royal pupil who so sorely needed him, and banished from court. Indeed, he was exiled to his diocese, and only once during all the rest of his life (eighteen years) allowed to leave it.

Just why Louis XIV should have been so indifferent to the subversion of Cambrai, and so willing to leave its rich benefice in the hands of a prelate who was not in his good graces, is conjectural. But there Fénelon stayed, corresponding with the Duke of Burgundy in the pious hope of preparing, through him, a new era for France, and otherwise labouring to spread an exposition of the "sublime, so simple and familiar that all may understand it."

Saint-Simon, who seldom praised any one, gives this picture of Fénelon as Archbishop of Cambrai.

> He lived in his diocese with the piety and application of a pastor. Cambrai is a place of great thoroughfare, and nothing equals the discernment, the charm, the elegant distinction with which it welcomes all the world.

Fénelon's gifts to beneficence, his frequent episcopal visits to all parts of his diocese, and his deep knowledge of all affairs therein; the gentle sagacity of his government; his many sermons in the city and in the village round about; the ease with which he might be approached; his humanity with the little, his courtesy with the rest of the world; his natural graces, enhancing all that he did and said, made him adored by his people; and the priests, of whom he declared himself the father and the brother and whom he so treated, cherished the most profound and touching regard for him. . . . Although his table was magnificent and choice, and everything in his establishment was of the state of a great noble, there was nothing about it that was not of an episcopal odour and regulated by the most upright honour and gentle liberty; he himself set, always, an example none could equal—in all things a true prelate, in all things a great seigneur, and above all things the author of *Télémaque*.

After the Revolution the bones of Fénelon were piously re-assembled (or, at least, so it was believed), re-entombed, and surmounted with a recumbent figure of the prelate by David of Angers.

Napoleon visited Cambrai in 1811. And it was by way of Cambrai that Louis XVIII made his second entry into France to re-establish the Bourbon dynasty. He arrived at Cambrai, from Ghent (whither he had fled after the Hundred Days), the 26th of June, 1815 — eight days after Waterloo; and two days later there appeared the celebrated manifesto, dated at Cambrai and bearing the signature of Prince Talleyrand, by which the King ordered the proscription of the regicides.

XVII

SEDAN

WHEN, in 1870, the name "Sedan" became associated with the downfall of the second French Empire, it carried with it (for most persons outside of its own province of France) little or no suggestion of what it had been before September 1, 1870; and since then it has, I think, made its past little if any better known. Sedan, in most minds, has been—these years since 1870—identified with that one episode alone; until the fall of 1918, when Americans learned with interest that at Sedan our troops were giving some of the final wallops to that German Empire which was born of the arrogance of Prussia over what happened at Sedan in 1870.

Not many tourists went to Sedan. It is, by rail, on the longest of the four routes between Paris and Metz; and by road one would not be likely to find himself there, or thereabouts, unless he were one of the comparatively few who were beauty-wise enough to acquaint themselves with the valley of the Meuse as far as Dinant, Bouvines, Crèvecœur, and Namur. On such an errand he might "run over" from Mèzières-Charleville to Sedan and even across the Belgian frontier to Bouillon to see the picturesque castle and the lovely country it dominates and to spend the night in the excellent little

Hôtel de la Poste where Napoleon III was lodged after his surrender.

Not being a "stop-over point" on any much-frequented route, and having little of interest to show casuals, Sedan attracted few except "prowlers" like ourselves who went gipsying along, picking up trails as they beckoned us, and under no urge to get to any particular place at any particular time.

But Sedan as a stopping point for American travellers has a future, if she has not a past.

And there are things about the town's history that I am sure some Americans at least will like to recall when they go there—as many will.

No place in America has a known history reaching so far into the past as that of Sedan. Yet, as French towns go, Sedan has no antiquity at all. Cæsar never knew her, Attila never ravaged her; she wasn't even there when Godfrey of Bouillon went marching away from his near-by castle on that thrilling First Crusade into Palestine.

Considering its situation, its surroundings, and its physiognomy, it is a wonder that Sedan stayed in obscurity so long. The great highway from Strasbourg and Nancy to St. Quentin and Cambrai passes through Sedan, where it is joined by another ancient road, from Trèves; the road from Châlons into Belgium crosses the others at Sedan. The Meuse flows through the town, and is there joined by other watercourses, small but of vast usefulness to industry. Coal and iron abound in the vicinity. Forests likewise. And, lastly, there is the rock "cut out for a fortified place" at the foot of which the town lies.

How the Gauls and Romans and their successors passed this by for so many centuries is a mystery.

But so far as we know (and Sedan has had more than one good historian), there was nothing at this point of many vantages but a humble hamlet until the early part of the fifteenth century. The hamlet was a dependency of the Abbey of Mouzon, nine miles away, which made a great deal of interesting history for itself without sharing any of it with the hamlet ruled by Mouzon's abbot.

The abbey of Mouzon was, in its turn, a dependency of the great ecclesiastical principality of Reims. And in 1379 it seems to have occurred to King Charles V of France that it would be a good thing for the crown to own Mouzon and its dependencies; that a crown property there on the north border of Champagne might be worth more to France as a bulwark against the Germans than the small town of Cormicy on the road between Reims and Soissons. So he "swapped" Cormicy, which belonged to the crown, for Mouzon —an exchange which the Archbishop of Reims was doubtless glad to effect—though Charles did not do anything to make his new possession formidable as a bulwark of the realm except to give it a handsome coat of arms and name the Dauphin its governor. And Charles VI, who seemed bent, in his poor, crazy way, upon denuding France of everything that might serve her, gave Mouzon as a seigniory to one of his chamberlains, on no other condition than that of loyalty and homage.

A son of this chamberlain inherited Mouzon. And then, having no heir, he sold it to his brother-in-law, Everard III de la Marck, whose other possessions were across the border. This was in 1424, when France was practically without a king and ravished by many enemies; Paris was held by the English (as were vast

areas elsewhere in France), the Burgundians were getting bolder and more rapacious every day; those parts of France not terrorized by the English or the Burgundians were ravaged by the Armagnacs; Charles VII was skulking at Bourges and Chinon; and the Maid of Domremy had not yet begun to hear voices.

There was no way of guessing how the cat of destiny would jump. But Everard was a shrewd man, and he "figured" (as we say nowadays) that the vicinity of Mouzon was an excellent one for a nice little fortified stronghold which he might "play" like a castle in a game of chess, to balk this move or back that one, as should best advantage him.

Not Mouzon, however, but the hamlet where Sedan now is, looked to him to be the best place for such a castle; so he set about building one and making it so formidable that his superiors on both sides of the border would lose no time in courting his favour. He owed allegiance on both sides and might serve either. His immediate overlord in France was the crown; across the frontier he owed first fealty to the prince-bishop of Liège and through him to their sovereign the emperor of Germany.

All this is, I think, interesting because it brings Sedan upon the stage of history as a strategic point in the everlasting warfare between Germany and France—in which warfare Sedan has played her best known if not her principal rôles.

Everard built the castle. His son, Jean, walled the town which quickly grew up in the castle's shade.

John had four sons, one of whom was that "Wild Boar of the Ardennes" whom Scott has so horrifically drawn in *Quentin Durward* and Comines in his fascinating *Memoirs*.

For four or five generations the seigneurs of Sedan played fast and loose with France and France's immemorial Menace. (As they were of Westphalian origin and the German branch of the family owned vast estates of which some eleven thousand square miles descended to the head of the de la Marck clan in our day, and as most of them personified the rapacity and lack-loyalty of those times, their behaviour was not surprisingly scandalous.)

Then came one of them of different sort, a man of ideals; and Sedan entered on a new era.

This man was Henri-Robert de la Marck; and, as a result of the war abilities of his forbears, what he inherited was not a French fief but a little independent sovereignty, precariously placed for security but interestingly placed for the sort of internal developments Henri-Robert had in mind.

Protestantism had begun to make some headway in France, and Henry II had ordered its suppression; had given an inquisitional tribunal "the power to arrest, imprison, and punish with death all persons, without distinction of rank or sort, suspected or found guilty of heresy."

Henri-Robert of Sedan inclined favourably towards the reformed religion, but had not yet embraced it when the persecution started in France.

At once he saw his opportunity. He would make Sedan an asylum for the refugees. They were, almost without exception (he knew), persons who could and would give him sturdy and intelligent aid in building up his little state, making it economically and intellectually strong.

So he abjured Catholicism—not quietly, but with all the pomp and circumstance he could, making a first-

class advertising campaign out of it. This implied no lack of sincerity. But Henri-Robert, who had so many other ideas far in advance of his time, knew something of the value of publicity.

Instead, however, of declaring Sedan a Protestant state because he himself had become Protestant, Henri-Robert, supported by the town council of Sedan, announced that both religions might be freely practised throughout his small dominion, and no one should be in any way interfered with on account of his preference.

He did, indeed, confiscate the properties of the Church; but only to turn them into establishments for the education of the poor, and for benevolences of many sorts. So well did he organize care for the needy that he was able to forbid begging in his domain, knowing that there could be no necessity for it. Fancy this, in the midst of the squalors of those times!

Almost immediately great crowds of refugees began flocking to Sedan; the town grew and grew, and burst its bounds—its walls! Henri-Robert tore down the old walls and built new ones enclosing much more space. Soon the population overflowed the new walls and began settling suburbs. Nor was it a "squatter" accretion. Most of those who came were skilled workers; they set up industrial centres which flourished exceedingly. At Sedan one colony introduced the manufacture of woollen cloth; at Givonne, three miles away, another colony devoted itself to the production of scythes.

Henri-Robert made it his business to insure his people not only religious freedom and protection, but a larger measure of civil liberty than was the order of his day. The judicial reforms he instituted are in force to this day—though many of them were not adopted in France

until two centuries later than Henri-Robert's introduction of them at Sedan.

The quality in Henri-Robert, however, which most signally distinguishes him for me is that he knew how much remains to be done *after* we get good laws and *before* we arrive at justice or improved conditions. He knew how much depends on the administrators of the law, and how much can fail through their incapacity or through their negligence or greed or prejudices. So he borrowed from some of the French provinces a custom which was one of the most picturesque expressions of that evolving sense of human rights we call the drama of civilization.

On a certain day of the year [wrote Peyran, Sedan's best historian] those who filled offices to which they had been appointed by the prince—such as bailiffs, lieutenants, lawyers, sergeants of justice, notaries, recorders, etc.—were called to assemble in the temple. The prince in person was president of the assembly. There, all subjects and burghers who had complaint to make of unjust judgments, arbitrary acts, false interpretation or application of the laws, presented themselves and made publicly, in the presence of the magistrates they accused, declaration of their dissatisfactions. The magistrates or officers defended themselves. And the prince carried away the written evidence on both sides, deliberated on it in his council, and either approved the acts of his lieutenants or reproved them and ordered wrongs redressed.

According to the laws Henri-Robert gave Sedan, "no burgher or subject may be arrested without warning and warrant; the accuser and the accused are to be locked up for twenty-four hours, and if in that interval the former has not stated a good case, both

persons are to be released and the accuser is to pay all cost and even damages."

I may be impractical; but I can't help believing that a little of this good human sense of Henri-Robert's might be grafted upon our present system to its enormous benefit.

Henri-Robert believed in knowledge—more knowledge for everybody. He believed in educating the children of the very poor, and in increasing the opportunities for higher learning at Sedan.

After the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Eve, many men eminent in scholarship fled to Sedan for safety and were received by Henri-Robert not only with kindness but with soul-satisfying gladness; he welcomed them not only to his court but to his table, gave them grants or pensions, and commissioned them to perform important works for his principality. With their aid he founded an academy of languages and letters, which soon became celebrated throughout Europe.

All these things, and many more, Henri-Robert wrought for his principality in the short space of seventeen years. Then he was gathered to his fathers who —unless many things had been revealed to them beyond the grave—must have found Henri-Robert strangely incompatible.

His widow, a Bourbon princess, was regent for eleven years, and as excellent an one as even Henri-Robert could have wished. Under her wise and just rule, liberty of conscience completed its triumph over religious rivalry and jealousy, administration expenses were always less than government revenues, agriculture was encouraged, and manufacture of arms and of woolstuffs increased rapidly.

The Princess-Regent turned over the government of this flourishing little sovereignty to her elder son in 1583. But he, poor young man, was destined to have little good of his inheritance. The League of Spain, with the most intolerant of the French Catholic nobles and bishops, was determined that no prince who favoured religious liberty should be allowed to reign. When they were opposed to even such a degree of latitude as Catherine de' Medici's third son allowed, and drenched France in blood in their efforts to dethrone him, we may imagine the horror with which they regarded the "goings-on" in Sedan.

They sent a large and "persuasive" army, under the dukes of Guise and Lorraine, to tell Henri-Robert's young son that neither he nor any of his breed would be tolerated in power in the principality his parents had laboured so mightily to bless.

After a bitter reign of five years—during which he saw his country ravaged and despoiled, his subjects horribly mistreated—the young prince died. His younger brother had predeceased him, also a victim of the merciless war waged by the League. Neither was married; and the heir to the throne of Sedan was their little sister Charlotte whose accession her brother had made conditional on her marriage with a prince of equal rank and of the same faith.

While such a husband was being sought for her, she had as governor for her province, in her minority, the celebrated Huguenot Marshal of France La Noüe, who put an end to the terrorization by the League and did a great deal to restore prosperity as well as security in Sedan.

It was the time when Henri of Navarre was endeavouring to become King of France (in fact as he was in name) without also becoming a Catholic; and he

recognized his advantage in helping Charlotte find a husband who was not only a good prince and a good Protestant, but also a good fighter, able to defend his principles and his king.

He believed that all these conditions were fulfilled in Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Viscount of Turenne; and he went in person to Sedan to see this auspicious nuptial knot tied, on the eleventh of October, 1591. At the same time Turenne took, with Henri's consent, the title of Duke of Bouillon and Prince of Sedan; and immediately he rode off, at the head of Charlotte's forces now become his, and that same night surprised and took the fortified town of Stenay, twenty-four miles distant from Sedan.

"I shall soon be master of my kingdom," Henri of Navarre cried when he heard this news, "if the new husbands make me many such wedding presents!"

But when Henri of Navarre concluded that a change of religion was an easier way to become master of his kingdom, Henri of Bouillon and Sedan did not change with him—in consequence of which Henri IV took away the independence of the little principality.

Charlotte died, without issue, after a brief married life; and the lady chosen to succeed her was Elizabeth of Nassau, daughter of William the Silent, of Orange and the Netherlands.

Elizabeth bore two sons whom she sent, when their father died, to study soldiering and statecraft under her brother, the Prince of Orange. This was deemed, by some, rank ingratitude to France; but the reader of today, whatever his "persuasions," will scarcely blame Elizabeth for feeling that France under the regency of Marie de' Medici was not an ideal place for young Protestant princes to grow up.

One of these princes became Duke of Bouillon (there being no longer any prince of Sedan). And it was he, Frederick Maurice, who became involved with the rash and handsome young Marquis of Cinq-Mars in the conspiracy to overthrow Cardinal Richelieu. Cinq-Mars thought he could control the King; but Louis XIII showed unexpected opinions and energy, in consequence of which Cinq-Mars lost his comely head, and Frederick Maurice forfeited his estates to the crown of France, as his father had forfeited their sovereign independence.

So Sedan became again an appurtenance of the crown of France.

As a centre of learning, of unfettered thought, sovereign Sedan had played an important part in the intellectual development of France and of other countries. She made a memorable stand for liberty of conscience. And she was a leader in many reforms affecting civil and social and industrial liberties. Her Protestant university was as celebrated as that of Geneva in latter days. It was attended by youth of many countries.

She led in elegance, also: witness the sedan-chair which originated with her and spread thence all over Europe. And it was a printer of Sedan who, early in the seventeenth century, invented the type font which was first known as *sedanoise* and latterly as *parisienne.*

The library of the princes was extraordinarily rich in the most precious manuscripts, which the savants of the Academy of Sedan were privileged to use at will. And the princes were also enthusiastic (and discriminating) collectors of antique armour and weapons; it was their treasures of this sort that formed the basis of the great museum of arms and armour now housed in the Hôtel des Invalides at Paris.

Marshal Fabert, who took possession of Sedan for Louis XIII after its confiscation, was the son of a printer, and the first "commoner" who became a marshal of France. He was a wise administrator as well as a good soldier, and at once began to put Sedan in a better state for defence against attacks from the north, and to develop her industrial conditions.

For some years the making of woollen cloths had been an industry at Sedan; but the quality of cloth was vastly inferior to that made in Flanders and in Holland, where the secrets of manufacture were jealously guarded.

Fabert appreciated what it would mean to Sedan to be able to make cloth like that of the Netherlands; and under his governorship there was set on foot and fostered with public funds a great movement to improve the cloth-weaving industry.

Abraham Chardron, whom a fellow townsman had described as "full of zeal and of intelligence and prepared by practical knowledge for the great task he undertook," was sent into the Netherlands to investigate manufacturing methods, buy the best machines, enroll skilled workers, and bring a completely equipped and manned wool-weaving colony to Sedan.

The prosperity that attended this development was sore smitten, after fewer than two-score years, by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Four hundred Protestant families had to leave Sedan; two thousand workers were driven to beg bread; the university was closed; its learned faculties were scattered; the busy forges of the neighbouring villages stood cold and deserted in depopulated streets.

The wool industry, however, suffered least. Its workers were principally of Flemish origin or descent, and Catholics. They went on with their weaving,

and in fifty years their production was not only the largest in France but also had attained a quality unsurpassed.

And thereby hangs a tale of contrast. For when the Flemings were brought into the Protestant stronghold of Sedan, everything that could be done to make them happy in their exile was sedulously undertaken: a Catholic chapel was erected for them in their own suburb of Dijonval, a Flemish priest was brought to minister to them; they were permitted not only to make their own rules and regulations for work and for leisure, but to retain their Flemish terms for the technicalities of their work and to impose them as standard upon the French trade.

To an era of such enlightened tolerance, a bigoted woman, seeking to salve her guilty conscience by rendering what she deemed a great service to her Church, put a violent end.

Sedan, however, was destined again to become famed for her nurture of those fine fruits which ripen on the sunny walls of generosity and in the benign air of Live-and-let-live.

The spirit of Henri-Robert and his noble wife, and of Elizabeth of Nassau and Fabert, was never lost to Sedan; always, in some form or other, it has remained. And now and then it has gone forth to conquer.

Elizabeth's younger son was Louis XIV's great Marshal Turenne, who did so much to make France far-flung and powerful and who, after having shared for more than a century the sepulchre of France's kings, at St. Denis, now shares that of her great Emperor in the Dôme des Invalides.

Turenne, after having declined Louis XIV's offer to revive for him the office of Grand Constable of

France, if he would become Catholic, finally was added to those whom Bossuet's eloquence persuaded to change their communion. But it was his good fortune to die before the Revocation plunged his beloved Sedan into persecution and depletion.

As that wave of bigotry receded, there seems to have been a reflux of Protestants into Sedan. And when they were again, briefly, penalized in 1787 by being barred from certain civil privileges, their townsmen of the older faith seem to have rejoiced with them when the Revolution restored to them all their rights.

There were no revolutionary excesses at Sedan. The people welcomed the Republic and fought valiantly for it in response to the appeal of Lafayette; but they protested (not among themselves merely, but through their magistrates direct to the National Assembly) against the condemnation to death of Louis XVI. They had no disorders; their change of régime was bloodless, decent, even dignified. Liberty was no stranger to them. They had loved her and learned of her for years. What they suffered of tyranny came to them from afar.

In the early nineteenth century Sedan had another phase of development which redounds to her credit, it seems to me, not less than those earlier phases which I have here recounted.

The governments which succeeded one another after the overthrow of the Terrorists showed no disposition to recognize the fine spirit that characterized the people of Sedan, their fitness to play a leading part in an enlightened new order of things. They thought of her only as a frontier town. The fortifications were extended and strengthened until Sedan became a large entrenched camp; the citadel was repaired and en-

larged; a military hospital was built; an arsenal was installed in the château; three great barracks overflowed with soldiers. Sedan was a national bulwark and she was made intensively aware of it.

She was willing to guard the border of France. But she was not willing to give herself up wholly to that business. Her pride in her old industries, especially those of metallurgy and wool, was intense; and she was determined that they should not languish because of "preparedness."

It is, however, not with her desire for prosperity that I wish to concern you—but with her pioneering efforts at industrial equity, her foresight in trying out methods of insuring and safeguarding her workers.

I have before me, as I write, some economic data about Sedan fourscore years ago and thereabouts; and I have found them so interesting that I cannot guess other than that many readers will care for them too.

It was a time of misery for all working classes, everywhere. The recent introduction of machinery had been attended with disorders and much suffering. Squalor and hopelessness reigned among the industrial workers.

At Sedan, conditions were less bad than elsewhere; but there was a good deal of distress, and out of it arose some efforts which seem to me worthy of chronicle here.

The town contained then about fourteen thousand inhabitants (as against twenty thousand when the late war began) of whom five thousand were workers in wool-weaving. (In addition to that number lodged within the walls, there were some sixty-five hundred wool-workers who lived in the suburbs.) There was

some recovery from the displacement effected by power-looms; for, whereas two workers were then doing, in many instances, the amount of work that had required eighteen pairs of hands two decades before, the total number of persons employed in wool-weaving at Sedan had decreased only about three thousand instead of ten thousand or more; and the production had very greatly increased.

There was, however, a good deal of unemployment; and wages were not high—they ranged from ten to fifteen cents a day for children and fifteen to nineteen cents for women, to thirty cents for men who wove a solid colour fabric and forty-five to fifty cents for those who could weave "novelties."

But—housing was cheap, and food was cheaper, and any one who drank to excess couldn't get a job. Bread of good quality was a cent a pound, and potatoes of the best grade were sold five pounds for a cent.

The working day was fourteen to fifteen hours, winter and summer; and sometimes Saturday was prolonged not only through the night but until Sunday noon.

Those, however, were average hours and wages for the times; in some larger cities, like Rouen and Lille, wages were higher but so were necessities.

Sedan had long been noted for its sobriety, and that tends to keep poverty from becoming degradation.

And there was a spirit of guardianship in the employers that went far beyond their concerted efforts to keep down drink. At a time when very few manufacturers accepted any responsibility for the welfare of their workers, the cloth-weavers of Sedan voluntarily charged themselves with many.

The best of them provided large factories, well

heated and well kept; they continued in their employment old men and women and gave them easy work which they could do while comfortably seated. If an employé fell ill, his place was not lost to him—he regularly received his pay, and out of it he paid a substitute of his own choice with whom he made his own arrangement. Once admitted to a factory, a worker knew that, unless he made himself undesirable, he would probably have employment there as long as he lived, and his children after him. In times when unemployment was so prevalent, this meant a great deal to a man's peace of mind.

In 1842 the leaders of the wool industry at Sedan instituted a sort of insurance which is only now beginning to have wide adoption in our best commercial organizations: in the five months of winter each worker paid one per cent. of his wages into a fund; in the seven months of summer he paid two per cent. Whatever he paid, his employer added an equal sum. From the amount thus raised the sick workers were paid while they were ill a sum equal to their regular wage; burial expenses were met; workers injured beyond further usefulness were given monthly pensions; old persons unable to earn enough to live on were "helped out"; and so on.

Children were not permitted to work until they had completed their tenth year (in many of the fabric factories of our own United States there are now employed, "law or no law," children of six and seven) and education, if not compulsory, was general.

I have given space here to an enumeration of these things because they were steps in advance taken by the rulers of the nineteenth century: the industrial overlords, who succeeded in power to the abbots and

bishops, the feudal barons, and the kings; and they were steps taken not under compulsion, in a spirit of grudging concession, but voluntarily, in a spirit of justice. They were heritors—those manufacturers!—of something fine and imperishable which Henri-Robert gave to his city of Sedan when he crowned it with tolerance, unfettered learning, and respect for the rights of others.

And now we come to a late-summer day in 1870, when the little town of Sedan suddenly became the stage of great events.

Marshal MacMahon and his army of one hundred thousand men, cut off from the roundabout road whereby they sought to reach (from Châlons) Metz and relieve Bazaine, had to fall back upon Sedan and prepare to make a stand against the advancing Germans.

The battle began very early in the morning of September first—about 4.30. Three hours later Marshal MacMahon was severely wounded in the thigh. His second-in-command, General Ducrot, then took the lead—not knowing that General Wimpffen, who had arrived only the night before, carried in his pocket orders which made him the army's head in event of MacMahon's death or injury. There was no little confusion attendant on these changes; but that thereby the battle was lost no one now contends.

There was much gallant fighting by the French, especially by their cavalry; nearly a fifth of all the men engaged on the French side, in the defence of Sedan, fell in combat long before the set of that day's sun. The Emperor was there, suffering from one of those acute attacks of stone in the bladder which wore down not only his physical strength but his mental balance and his moral courage. It is said that his soldiers

tore down the first white flag of surrender that he ordered raised. This is highly probable. It was indecision and other weaknesses in high places, not lack of fervour in the ranks, that cost France so dear in 1870.

After twelve hours of fighting, the French army was completely surrounded, every avenue of escape closed, and there passed into captivity an emperor, a marshal of France, thirty-nine generals, three thousand two hundred and thirty other officers, and nearly eighty thousand men. Napoleon III delivered up his sword to King William of Prussia; and the Second Empire passed into history.

But the weaving of fine cloth went prosperously on, at Sedan.

In August, 1914, the Germans came again. This time it was the Duke of Württemburg's army, with that of the Imperial Crown Prince on their left. They crossed the Meuse at Sedan on August twenty-fourth. Most of them passed on, with brief pause, towards the Marne. But Sedan was thenceforth a martyr town, shamed, despoiled, all her cherished decencies and dignities befouled.

If her looms resumed their clack-clacking, the product was doubtless of field-gray colour. It is more probable, though, that the machinery was carried across the Rhine and there sold, to help keep the War Lord's coffers full.

Year after year passed in slavery, in suffering.

Then, on a November day, in 1918, came clear-eyed youths, clad in the hues of the Ardennes in autumn. They spoke in a strange tongue. They seemed to comprehend little about France. But they were there "to get Heinies." They had come thousands of miles

to fight the Menace. Something in them made them feel the futility of anybody trying to live, to be free, to be decent, while that *Thing* lay coiled to spring—much less, while it was at millions of throats.

There had been much interchange between Washington and Berlin as to who and what represented the German people. But to those boys in brown everything that wore the field-grey livery was the thing that threatened civilization. So they "got" as many as they could, without waiting for any one to distinguish between the weary and the wanton among the "Heinies." And soon Sedan was French again; restored to its citizens and to its nation by an army which was called into action by that sense of "fair play" Sedan has fostered these many stressful centuries.

XVIII

THE MARNE VALLEY

AS the crow flies, it is just one hundred and sixty miles from the source of the Marne, near Langres, to its mouth at Charenton, a Paris suburb, where it empties into the Seine.

As the river road runs, it is two hundred miles.

And as the Marne twists and turns it is three hundred and twenty-eight.

Practically every foot of the way it waters is the stage of great events for two thousand years past. But "the Marne," as this war has graven it on the hearts of men and on the tablets of history, begins at Vitry, ninety miles (by road, from Langres, and ends at Lagny, some fifteen miles east of Charenton.

"From the fifth to the tenth of September, 1914, the destiny of France and probably of the whole of western civilization was at stake on the plains of the Marne."

I quote from *The Victory of the Marne*, by Louis Madelin, one of the "Studies and Documents on the War" published in Paris by an eminent committee of professors and academicians, with M. Ernest Lavisse, the celebrated historian, at its head.

In those five days the greatest onslaught ever made upon civilization was practically defeated. The war had a weary, costly, bloody length yet to run; but its

entire aspect changed in those five days, and thereafter it became a matter of convincing Germany that she could not win.

For nearly four years that struggle, continuing in many places, did not again involve the Marne. Then came the great offensive of 1918, bringing battle once more to the old scene of German defeat; and the counter-attack of July, wherein Germany became convinced.

The Germans know history, but they don't understand it. They are for ever missing its most pointed significances. And as for its subtle meanings, written between the lines, they don't even suspect that there are such.

If they had construed the past, they would not have adventured in the valley of the Marne where France has so often so all but invariably been victorious.

Against the domestic tyranny of her princes and her kings the nation has here spoken her triumphant will [says Alphaud]. Against foreign invasions she has here raised barriers sudden and impassable. It seems as if there were here a mysterious breakwater, whose ridges repulse each assault of the German wave, and from whose top, after each tempest, France smilingly shows her deeply moved people the receding surge—ferocious still, but once again overpowered. It is earth to touch foot to which suffices to re-create hope in great captains and make them reacquainted with Victory.

It is there that Joffre led his armies [says Madelin], it is there he intended they should fight. In contact with the soil where France took her existence, Frenchmen will discover in themselves superhuman strength, like Antea, the giant in the fable, who became invincible every time Hercules allowed him to embrace his mother, the Earth.

For ten days Joffre's men fell back and back in the grilling heat, fighting as they went, half dead of fatigue, and thirst and choking dust, their faces powder-blackened, their feet bleeding, their eyes staring with something akin to desperation.

Then, on the morning of September fifth, came the Generalissimo's order: "The hour has come to hold at all costs and allow one's self to be slain rather than give way."

What fighting ensued, on that ground hallowed by French victories for fifteen centuries!

After five days of it General Mahoury sent this word to his men:

> Comrades, our Generalissimo asked you in the name of your country to do more than your duty—you have replied in a way surpassing anything deemed possible. . . . If I have been of use, I have been rewarded by the greatest honour that could be conferred on me during my long career, namely, that of commanding men such as you.

And after a week of it "the German army, repulsed after fierce fighting, had abandoned two thirds of the territory it had invaded," and the plans of forty years failed of fruition.

"The miracle of the Marne" was aided by military strategy as brilliant as ever won a decisive victory. Nevertheless, there will always be a mystic element about it, a thrill of the supernatural, although we know, now, who were the "ghostly army," the "angelic legions," and what Foch did for mankind when he threw his 42d Division into that breach through which the Prussian Guard was pouring. It is with no thought of setting him be ow the mightiest of them all, that France

cherishes the belief that Joffre's superb skill was aided by invisible fighting forces—the immortal spirits of old victories; that not only Foch fought with him, and Manoury, and Gallieni, and d'Esperey, and Castelnau, and Sarrail, and Langle de Cary, and Dubail, but Aëtius, and Charles Martel, and the little Maid of Domremy, and all France's captains of civilization.

It is the purpose of this chapter to lay before those of us to whom France's memories and traditions have recently taken on a new and more closely related significance, a brief survey of the events which have made the Marne Valley such a place that just to touch foot to it "suffices to re-create hope in great captains and to make them reacquainted with Victory."

The Marne rises south-east of the town of Langres, which stands on plateau so high—1550 feet—above sea-level, that there is a delightful tradition it was one of the first places uncovered when the great flood receded.

The Abbé de Mangin who long ago wrote a history of Langres very gravely referred its founding to a time shortly after "the bold enterprise of the Tower of Babel had failed."

A more conservative lover of antiquity traced the beginnings of Langres no further back than 1800 B.C.

Whatever may be the truth, the hill town of France, from the feet of which the Marne sets out on its adventures, has long enjoyed a reputation for extreme venerability.

After leaving Langres, the Marne journeys northward without encountering anything specially interesting or memorable until it comes to Joinville, which isn't much now but a pleasant little industrial town; but long ago it was a very story-book place indeed,

from which one Crusader after another set forth with banners fluttering, and whose seigneurs had a facility for the favour of kings.

By and by the Marne arrives at St. Dizier, where it becomes navigable. Two German invasions of long ago were responsible for the founding of this town. The first was when the Vandals came, in 264, and sacked the age-hoary hill town of Langres, some of whose inhabitants escaped and fled up the river towards the dense forests, carrying with them the remains of Saint Dizier. When they felt safe from the barbarians (or as safe as anybody could feel while still there were barbarians in Europe) they built a chapel on the bank of the Marne, to house the precious relics. Habitations grouped themselves, inevitably, about the place of prayer. And there was quite a colony at St. Dizier two centuries later when Gallo-Romans, fleeing before Attila, came there for refuge—and stayed there to begin life anew.

Many centuries thereafter St. Dizier made so gallant a resistance to the Emperor Charles V that *parlement* decreed a celebration of it in Paris, including the solemn chanting of a *Te Deum* in Notre Dame. The singular thing about this is that St. Dizier did not escape the German Emperor—he took it, not by force (although his army outnumbered the defenders ten to one) but by forging a letter which purported to be from the Duke of Guise under the King's orders and instructing the commandant of St. Dizier to surrender; Charles V, to complete the deception, removed an actual seal of Lorraine from a veritable document and affixed it to this forgery. Yet, in spite of its temporary loss to France through this characteristically German trick, the heroic defence St. Dizier had made was

deemed to have "contributed no little to save the realm from the per l of a terrible invasion."

Therefore, the *Te Deum!*

Some years later, St. Dizier, reunited to France by the peace of Crespy, was, like St. Quentin, one of the towns given as dower to Mary Stuart when she became the widow of Francis II. And one of her titles thereafter was that of Dame of St. Dizier.

On March 23, 1814, Napoleon came to St. Dizier and there tarried for five days, which proved a fatal delay for him. For, when he belatedly set out to defend Paris, he was too late. By the time he reached Fontainebleau, his capital was in the power of those who were allied to cause his overthrow.

At that time it may well have seemed to many in France that the Marne Valley was not sustaining her reputation for upholding France's glory. But now there are few who regret the passing of the Empire—although all France reveres, almost worships, the memory of the incomparable General who led France out of anarchy and disruption into world-dominating glory.

On leaving St. Dizier, the Marne follows a very wavering course to Vitry, which Julius Cæsar founded and left in charge of a military colony made up of picked soldiers of one of his victorious legions; and it is from *legio victrix* that Vitry derived its name. Cæsar built a fortress there, to guard his conquests in the vicinity. And his soldiers did their best to erect at the foot of the fortress a town patterned after Rome, with forum and capital and other familiar features in miniature.

Things-a-plenty happened at Vitry during the first thirteen or fourteen centuries of her existence; but I

am not sure that many readers would agree there should be room made for their recounting in this small chronicle.

But in 1321 there broke out in the town, then very prosperous and proud, a particularly frenzied persecution of the Jews who were accused of "wishing to" poison the rivers thereabouts. (Whether they attempted to do it, or were condemned for the evil desire, my sources of information do not say.)

But the Jews, who had great solidarity amongst themselves and strongly anti-social qualities allied with almost incredible persistence in prosecuting their affairs where they were not wanted, seem to have got, very early, a foothold in Vitry which Vitry was ever thereafter grudging them. In 279 they got authorization to live within the town walls, and founded a Jewish quarter. And, true to the traditions of their race, they remained a strange people, a people apart, through all the mergings of Romans and Gauls and their common conversion to Christianity and their united stands against the barbarians, their joint acceptance of Frankish sovereignty. Never in amity with the people of Vitry, they lived on and on, endured and enduring, until some series of exasperations culminated in that charge of "wishing to poison the rivers." Thereupon bitter persecutions broke out, in which the innocent suffered with the guilty. Sixty-seven had been massacred, and forty more were in prison pending the decision of the maddened populace as to what sort of torture should be meted out to them. Crazed with fear, the forty resolved to die undefiled by Christian hands; and the oldest and the youngest of them became the appointed slayers of all the rest, cutting their throats and causing death from bleeding—as they

killed their kosher meat. Then the young survivor dispatched the old one; but as he was about to slash his own throat, "he felt reawakening in his heart the love of life." So he endeavoured to escape by means of a rope made of clothing of his dead companions. The rope broke, he fell and broke a leg, was taken, and some hours afterwards was burnt alive on a pyre built of the thirty-nine slain bodies.

Instead of slaking the thirst for vengeance upon this unhappy people, the horrible episode just related must further have aroused the people of Vitry against Jews, because we read of a Jewish woman condemned, with her sons, to the stake, who shrieked this malediction upon Vitry:

"Evil be upon thee, cruel and accursed town! These flames may seem to die down, but they shall leap up again in many reprisals and burn thee utterly one day."

And many, indeed, were the "reprisals"! Fifty years later a terrible fire devoured the city. And forty years after that, it was put to the torch for having refused submission to the English.

But it recovered both times, and was so proud a city in 1454 that a crested peacock, regarding his gorgeous tail, was on its coat of arms; and its motto was the oft-quoted *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, or "Evil to him who evil thinks."

Then came Charles V and reduced it to a smouldering heap of ruins—to which, however, many of the inhabitants clung.

Francis I must have misliked the town's fire records. Perhaps he believed it was indeed accursed. For instead of rebuilding it on the old site, he ordered what stones were left there transported two and one half

miles away to another location on the bank of the Marne, and there utilized in the foundations of a new city, to which he gave the name of Vitry-le-François and, replacing the peacock, a salamander escaping from the flames. The salamander was the distinguishing feature of his own coat of arms, and decorates all those superb buildings wherewith Francis I so lavishly beautified France. But the bestowal of it upon Vitry was truly pertinent.

He did for the new town all that royal munificence could do. But this was not enough to lure the people away from the ruins of their old city. So Francis began demolishing their rebuilt dwellings as fast as they made them habitable; and further to enhance the attractions of his new city, he promised its inhabitants exemption from lodging his soldiers. This lured some, and the new city grew at the expense of the old. But that spot whereon life had been renewing itself for sixteen centuries could not, by any will however mighty, be given over to death and desolation; so, dwellings sprang up where dwellings so long had been, and the old town called itself Vitry-le-Brulé, or Vitry the Burnt.

In course of time, however, the more ancient Vitry gave up the struggle. And if anybody likes to think the dying Jewish mother did indeed bring evil upon it, he shall have no hindrance from me.

The Ornain, which rises about forty-five miles north-east of the Marne's source, and flows in the same general directions as the latter, empties into it at Vitry. And thence the Marne, swerving abruptly away from the great chalky plains that lie between Vitry and Sézanne with scarcely any villages in all those forty miles, turns north-west toward Châlons.

Châlons was not a new town when Attila came

thither; but nobody knows just how old it was. We do know, however, that it flourished under the Romans, and that Christianity was well entrenched there when the great horde of Huns swarmed around its walls in the year of our Lord 450. The Bishop, Alpin, must have been a venerable prelate, for he seems to have held the spiritual shepherd's crozier in that town as early as 409. And when the destroying hosts appeared, he probably went forth to meet them and to plead for his flock, like the good and courageous vicar he was. "The ferocity of Attila," we are told, "was suddenly touched with the eloquence, the courage, and the gentleness of the great-spirited Bishop, and he consented to withdraw and take his terrible hordes."

It was the following year that his reappearance in that vicinity resulted in the battle of Châlons which saved western Europe to Latin civilization and Christian faith and drove back beyond the Rhine barbarity and heathenism.

Authorities do not agree as to the exact locality where this so decisive struggle (in which, 'tis said, three hundred thousand perished in the single day of battle) was fought. Some locate the battle-field north-east of Châlons, toward Suippe, and some place it south-west, toward Troyes. But Châlons was on the edge of it, wherever it was; and the Marne doubtless ran red with the blood of those who, on a pretext as "thin" as the Austrian Archduke's assassination, were pretending to avenge some "wrongs" they cared nothing in the world about, while fighting for the complete sovereignty of their own brute and brutalizing force.

In the history of Châlons for some seven hundred years after Attila's defeat, there are many things I might relate but I'll omit them all but two. The first

is that in 813 Charlemagne convoked at Châlons a council of barons and bishops to formulate laws; "they there defined many regulations, ecclesiastic and civil, among others that each district should henceforth care for its poor and procure work for them"; so that at Châlons were born the "poor laws" of France. And the second is that after the battle of Fontenay, in 842, when the contentions between Charlemagne's three grandsons left nearly all the nobility of Champagne among the more than a hundred thousand dead, Châlons was first of the cities of Champagne to enact a new law, *la noblesse uterine*, by virtue of which a noble mother could transmit her feudal holdings to sons born of her by a plebeian or untitled and unendowed father. This last is interesting, it seems to me, partly because it is an example of the expediency which dictates laws; and partly because we may, if we like, find it an instance of woman biding her time—realizing she could not defend her rights, and making the best arrangement possible for the stability of her possessions and her social order.

The first half of the twelfth century was interesting at Châlons. Bernard, who was so largely to influence the Church in his day and for long thereafter, through the Cistercian order which he founded, was educated (at least in part) at the Châlons cathedral school, where he was associated with the saintly William of Champeaux who was first the master and then the rival of Abelard.

Those were the days when the Knights Templar were organizing. Bernard was drawing up their rules and regulations, and they were taking the white robe and the red cross as the distinguishing apparel of those whose high and holy calling it was to give relief and succour to soldiers of the Cross.

In 1147 Bernard preached the Second Crusade at Châlons, in the presence of the Pope (Eugene III, a Cistercian and Bernard's mouthpiece), the King of France (Louis VII), the ambassadors of the German Emperor (Conrad), and an immense concourse of French and German nobles. The famous abbot stood, while preaching this sermon, on a stone chair set up in the midst of the Jard, which was then, as now, a public promenade. The oriflamme fluttered beside him, indicating that the King of France would lead his armies against the infidels.

At this same convocation the Pope consecrated the rebuilt cathedral, assisted by eighteen cardinals and eleven bishops.

Great days of panoply those must have been for Châlons! A pontiff and all those gorgeous prelates; a King of France and his glittering court; an imperial embassy; Knights Templar, peers of the realm, *noblesse* grand and petty! Along with all these there would be, of course, a vast multitude of eager onlookers. What riot of colour must have flowed through the narrow old streets! What pageantry must have filled the old grey churches! What feasts must have made the trestle-tables groan in the great, vaulted halls of castles and palaces! What blare of trumpets and salvos of acclaiming voices must have hailed the Crusaders as they pledged themselves to deliver the Holy Sepulchre!

The mediæval town of Châlons had thirteen bridges across the Marne and its small tributaries around the city, and thirteen city gates.

Can you see the grey, battlemented walls, bastioned at frequent intervals, and pierced by those thirteen gates—each gate flanked by donjon towers, probably, loopholed and turreted, and served by a sharp-toothed

portcullis as well as by massive, nail-studded oak doors, and guarded by a drawbridge over river or moat? Can you see the cavalcades, pontifical, imperial, royal, knightly, wending their divers ways out through those gates and along the high roads converging at Châlons?

Think, then, of another occasion, nearly three hundred years later. The walls, the gates, the bridges, are still there. The churches are more numerous, and so are the monastic institutions. The Templars are no more; Crusaders belong to a past which seems very distant. France has had little thought of glory lately; she has, rather, been steeped in shame and suffering.

But a miracle has happened! A peasant girl from the marches of Lorraine has raised the siege of Orleans, brought heart to the French people, and is taking the Dauphin to Reims to be crowned

A few days ago they arrived before Troyes where the Dauphin's infamous mother had signed away his birthright. Jeanne demanded the city's submission to its King. The response was to slam in his face the city gates, and defy him to enter. All that Jeanne had need to do was to make her preparations for an assault. When the inhabitants saw the thoroughness of those, they capitulated gladly enough, and returned to their rightful loyalty. There was a grand entry; the citizens were "re-established in all their rights, honours, franchises, liberties, and privileges," and the march toward Reims was resumed.

When it was known the royal army was on the road from Troyes to Châlons (a distance of forty-five miles) a deputation of important citizens of Reims set out to meet the Dauphin at Châlons and there invest him with the keys of their city. And about the same time

in those early days of July, 1429, there came along the road towards Vitry, and thence to Châlons, a group of peasants from Domremy and Vaucouleurs who were bent on seeing their little maid "pass in her glory." Whether they adventured on, to Reims, I do not know. But they were there, at Châlons, to look upon the saviour of France and to satisfy themselves that it was indeed their little Jeanne who was taking the King to be crowned.

The temptation to linger over this episode is very great, but must be resisted.

The next picture of Châlons which (as it seems to me) you may care to look upon is of a June day in 1591. Old ecclesiastical stronghold though it was, Châlons so detested the League of ultra-Catholicism-without-quarter, that Henry of Navarre transferred the seat of *parlement* from Paris to Châlons. Then came the papal bull declaring Henry shorn of all rights to the crown of France.

Clergy as well as nobles and commoners dared to defy this "bull"; and when the dean of the cathedral found a copy of it on his doorstep, he turned it over to *parlement*, which ordered the offending edict burned by the public executioner on one of the principal squares of Châlons.

In 1671 the younger brother of Louis XIV, Philip, Duke of Orleans, was married at Châlons to Charlotte-Elizabeth of Bavaria. And nine years later Louis XIV was there to witness the marriage of his only son, the Grand-Dauphin, with another Bavarian princess—Marie-Anne-Victoria.

Then came the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and a reign of intolerance which Châlons could not resist as it had resisted the League. There were per-

secutions, emigrations; industry and commerce suffered here as elsewhere, and did not revive even when oppression ceased. The population three centuries ago is said to have been over sixty thousand. At the beginning of this war it was less than half that.

In the campaign of 1792 Châlons became the depot of the national army, the point at which volunteers from all districts of France assembled to fight off that dismemberment of their country which their kind Teutonic neighbours thought they could easily accomplish while France was in the throes of giving birth to democracy.

Valmy, where the Prussians decided to abandon their dinner dates at the Tuileries and the Palais Royal, and go home (if they could get there) is a matter of some eighteen miles from Châlons, on the road to Verdun.

In 1814 Châlons was Napoleon's general headquarters but was taken by the Prussians. In 1856 Napoleon III established a large camp of nearly thirty thousand acres, north of Châlons; and it was there that the army of Châlons was formed by Marshal MacMahon, after the first reverses in 1870, and marched thence to the Meuse, where it was surrounded at Sedan and forced to surrender. Châlons itself was taken by the Prussians that year.

These two Prussian successes at Châlons probably obscured Wilhelm II's backward vision and made him see dimly even so recent an event as Valmy—not to mention Attila's disaster.

It was a defensive federation of free peoples won to the advantages of Roman civilization and waking to the comfort of Christian faith, that drove back the barbarian hordes of Attila, in 451. It was militiamen of Châlons and other Champagne towns who,

together with the Soissons cavalry, sustained the principal shock at Bouvines, in 1214, and drove a German Emperor home to reflect on the sudden strength of a nation newly united under a King who encouraged communes and discouraged feudal power. It was men of Châlons, determined to be French, who, twice after Charles VII was crowned, held their city for him against those who would make him a vassal. It was Catholic men of Châlons who burned the papal bull barring Henry of Navarre from the throne because he was a Protestant—men with jaws set determinedly against pontifical tyranny. It was men rushing out from Châlons to Valmy who showed the Prussians made arrogant by Frederick the Great how sons of France could fight for France's new liberty. The French imperialism which Prussia was twice instrumental in overthrowing was a sporadic growth, predestined for termination. Almost, in a sense, it was self-limited; and the Prussian was present at the culmination, rather than the cause of it.

But when the soil of that Marne Valley has been reddened with the blood of those fighting for freedom as men's concepts of human liberties evolved the ideal of it, the soldiers of autocracy have met one fate, unfailingly.

From Châlons there are two main roads to Paris which diverge until they are perhaps fifteen miles apart and then converge at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. The southern of these roads leads through Montmirail. The northern is the river road which comes, presently, to Épernay, a venerable town with a not inconsiderable history but one without salient features.

The wine of Épernay is considered the best of all champagne, and is called the "wine of the river" as

distinguished from that of Reims, known as the "wine of the mountain." There was nothing in the prosperous, pleasant town to tempt one to linger. But many who passed that way stopped, as we did, for a wondering visit to one of the wine-making establishments—mostly under ground.

I think they told us there were twelve or fifteen miles of streets in the subterranean storage vaults of the firm we visited: Moët and Chandon. We didn't traverse all of them; but we saw enough to make us marvel where in all the world there could be consumption for so much wine retailing at prices ranging round three to six dollars a quart.

There was never any time at Reims to remember champagne. It was eclipsed by so many things of vastly greater interest. But at Épernay there was little else to impress the casual; so I always think of the latter town as a well-built, smiling place whose real character was not above ground but below, in illimitable congeries of damp, cobwebby streets cut in the chalky rock and lined with millions of bottles of sparkling grape juice destined to mark, if not to make, festivities all round the world.

From Épernay one may have choice of two roads to Château-Thierry, one on the north and one following the south bank of the Marne, the latter shorter by some three and one half miles.

The ancient manuscripts which hand down the earliest annals of Château-Thierry say that Charles Martel was so "charmed by the smiling aspect and by the fertility of the country" that in 720 he built himself a villa on this hill. About ten years later the importance of this strategic position dominating a vast plain, the proximity of the Marne, and the nearness of great

Roman routes, restored by Queen Brunhilde, inspired in him the idea of crowning the summit with a castle which should serve as a residence for his royal ward, Theodoric or Thierry."

The young Prince did not live long to enjoy his castle—neither its security, nor its military advantage, nor its natural beauties, which in those days meant principally its opportunities for the hunt.

But so natural a stronghold was it that it grew rapidly. Huts, houses, and small farms grouped themselves on the amphitheatre of the mountain as close to the castle as they could get. For in those days the only security for small folk was what they could fly to behind some friendly battlements.

The ruins of that castle still crown the hill above the little town. When I walked over them, on sunny afternoons, children played gleeful games amid the thick forest growths replacing crumbled ramparts. A beautiful shady promenade followed the brow of the hill where, through centuries aforetime, warders had paced behind the crenelations, peering up and down the Marne Valley for sight of encroaching foes. One could buy raspberry syrup, up there where archers and men-at-arms once held the defensive—syrup and cakes and picture postcards. And down below, the little town drowsed on its glinting, winding river. To the east stretched Champagne's vineyard slopes, which begin there. Westward, along the loveliest of river-roads, was Paris—fifty miles away.

It was very hard, standing there above a world of so much peace and pleasantness, to realize what stormy history that old town had seen. To apprehend what scenes it was soon to witness would, of course, have been impossible.

I'd like to write a dozen stories of Château-Thierry's other days—not of its sieges and battles so much as of quite different events like the splendid nuptials at the castle, in 1204, of Marie of Champagne with Baldwin, Count of Flanders. In all history there is nothing more romantic than their story, a bit of which comes into our chapter on Valenciennes. I'd like to tell tales of the leper hospital established there to care for the persons stricken with that frightful malady which the Crusaders brought home with them. I'd like to tell about the college Queen Blanche founded there in the eleventh century, with its lawyers' corporation like the English Inns of Court, and the quaint "privilege" the law students had of levying upon the millers thereabouts, on Epiphany eve, for "a cake, with divers comestibles"—a custom preserved down to our days, like many a celebrated "dole" in England.

I'd like to re-create scenes that were enacted in town and castle on the many occasions when Louis XIII kept state there with Anne of Austria and Richelieu. I'd like to recall many anecdotes of La Fontaine, the great fabulist, whose native place this was. And to recall how Château-Thierry folk came out to see the royal family of France brought back from their attempted flight in 1791. And how Lafayette was there, later in that same year, enrolling volunteers for the national guard. And how often Napoleon was here and hereabouts—especially when he was battling to preserve his empire.

But, instead, I'll use my space for more recent history —quoting from Gabriel Alphaud's *France during the War*.

Château-Thierry, he tells us, first heard the voices of cannon in this war on August thirty-first, 1914. "It

was the retreat. The second of September, in the afternoon, the Prussians entered the town by the road from Soissons. Shouldering arms, marching at parade step, the regiments of von Bülow filed in in ranks of eight and stacked their arms in the Place du Champ-de-Mars, on the right bank of the river." Their patrols filled the streets, and, after driving off the French rear-guard, occupied and barricaded the principal houses.

Across the river, facing the Palace of Justice, there is (or was) a beautiful domain comprising a superb château and a factory, separated and hidden, one from the other, by a park of magnificent trees.

This estate had been left in the care of two old servants, Hector and his wife, Fanny, a cook of more than local fame.

Immediately Prussian headquarters were established here by officers speaking perfect French and exhibiting thorough acquaintance with all the ins and outs of the place, the names of the two domestics, and the prime dishes in Fanny's repertoire.

They were in good humour, and Hector and Fanny treated them royally. The choicest wines, the oldest liquors, the finest cigars were set before them each meal—and Fanny's rarest dainties. Each time they asked where the supply of copper was kept, in the factory, Hector assured them that there was a lot of it and that it would keep—but Fanny's omelettes wouldn't.

On September ninth the order to retreat northward was sounded most unexpectedly. A fat Prussian general was just sitting down to enjoy a juicy beefsteak cooked as only Fanny knew how. There was no time to tarry; so he grabbed the steak, hot and sticky with sauce, and galloped off with it in his right hand

while his left shook the reins lashing his horse into flight. The precious copper was never found!

Meanwhile, over in the dining-room of the little Hotel Swan, on the other bank of the Marne, six other officers sat at table, refusing to believe in the victorious return of the French. Two French *chasseurs* took them prisoners. But the Colonel of the regiment to which those chasseurs belonged went up the hill, followed only by his orderly, to the hospital, where more than a hundred Germans were, rapped at the door with his sword-hilt, and commanded the male nurses and other able-bodied men to lay down their arms and surrender. They did.

When the Prussians left, the rich country in their wake was as if a plague of locusts had devastated it —stripped of food, of clothing, of furnishings, of implements, of everything. Many were the exquisite acts of unselfishness, in those days of privation—such, for instance, as that of a poor old woman, past eighty, from whom the Germans had stolen everything but a blanket. Two nursing mothers, exhausted by hunger and misery, had dropped down on some filthy straw in a cow shed and were there found, with their babies, by this old woman.

"I have one foot in the grave," she said, bestowing her blanket on the children. "And I am more used to suffering than they are."

In this spirit they set themselves, in September, 1914, to the task not only of recommencing life for themselves, but also of extending hospitality to many hundreds of refugees whose territory was not evacuated in the retreat from the Marne. For three years and a half they laboured to restore, to "carry on." Then the destroying, defiling, desecrating hordes came back and re-took possession of Château-Thierry.

Back of them, for a depth of twenty-five miles, lay in fresh devastation the rich country in which patient labour had almost obliterated the traces of September, 1914.

Ahead of them lay the river road to Paris—and some khaki-clad "green" troops from overseas, mingling with the bronzed, bearded men in dust-powdered horizon blue who for nearly four years had held back the enemy of mankind.

"They shall not pass!" the blue-clad men of incredible withstanding said.

"Pass?" cried the fresh, eager boys new to war and straining at their leash. "Pass? Nothing doing! Those we overlook can beat it for Pretzel-land. But overlooking isn't the best thing we do!"

Château-Thierry is now as deep-graven on our scrolls of glorious remembrance as Valley Forge and Yorktown, Gettysburg and Appomattox.

The Huns, before fleeing Château-Thierry that second time, gave themselves over to a frenzied destructiveness such as only defeat can inspire. They even wrecked doll-houses and smashed nursery furnishings. The ruin they left in their wake was the completest their frenzied brutality could achieve. But the very fulness of it adds to that which Château-Thierry shall be for all time to come.

My mind is hung with pictures of the Marne at Château-Thierry; but one is pre-eminent.

It is evening—perhaps six-thirty of a night in late spring or in full tide of summer.

We have been wandering. We may have known, when we started out, where we were going; we may not have cared. Sometimes we just took to the road, adventuring, and followed trails that presented them-

selves alluringly to our eager eyes, or that called to us with romance-evoking names as we read guide-posts or scanned our road maps. Château-Thierry was often on our way out from Paris, or on our way home. On day trips and week-end trips and trips that lasted for months on end, we were more or less perpetually pulling up at Château-Thierry, a familiar port, and lingering for a while—oftenest in late afternoon or early evening.

If we got in early enough, this time whereof I write, we have probably been up on the ramparts of the old castle, walking up and down in the leafy shade and "pretending" all sorts of things whereof romances are made.

Then Louis has driven us into the yard of the Swan Hotel which was designed for coaches and postilions, not for limousines and chauffeurs, but graciously permits us to forget our modernity. And we have given notice of our desire to dine.

Dinner will be ready at seven. So we go out and sit on a bench beside the placid Marne—and wait, full of deep content.

There is a promenade along the river bank, flanked by rows of quaintly clipped trees which look as if they had come out of a toy Noah's Ark and should be accompanied by the various Shems, Hams, and Japhets with their respective missuses, all shaped like tiny dumbbells wearing little round hats.

Perhaps a string of canal barges passes as we sit there, and we have glimpses of that domesticity afloat which so unfailingly intrigues our envy—unless the child-heart has abandoned us. Each bargeman is smoking his evening pipe, and looking as if his life were one long eventide of full-fed ease. Children,

and dogs aware of the superiority of their lot, romp on the decks. Women, whom carking care seems to have passed by without stopping, water the blooming plants at the windows of their wee cabins, or gather in sweet-smelling garments that have swung all day in sunshine shared by vineyards of champagne.

All the world, it seems to us, is humming drowsily a song of tender content—a day's work done, a savory meal cooking, children waiting for companionship, and bedtime not too far off.

Who can imagine Charles Martel going hence, perhaps, to save Europe from the Saracen? Who can think back even a hundred years and see Napoleon here, battling for his empire? Who, of this generation, can comprehend war?

So we muse. The last time we drink deep of Château-Thierry's peace is July eleventh. We do not know that gray-clad hordes are mustering beyond the Rhine, and that their day for arriving in Château-Thierry, en route to Paris, has long been set.

We shall go again—please God!—to Château-Thierry; and sit beside the Marne, and try to remember peace, to realize that it has come again. And all about us there will be new memorials—to the men of America who fought there, under Foch, with the men of France, to bring peace back into a world whence the Hun had sought to bar it evermore.

"Materna," the Romans called that river which gradually became La Marne.

"The Mother!" Mother of a new era which has been maturing towards birth these two thousand years, there in the valley fecund with freedom.

The charter of new liberties for which the sons of democracy shed their blood in this war is second only

to the Gospel of Christ in the sacredness of its seal of blood and the worth of its working principles.

No place whereon that fight has been waged can ever be said to be holier than other places hallowed by the same struggle. No one can say that the blows delivered against the enemy on the Marne were more effective than those delivered on the Yser or the Somme or the Aisne or any other where; nor were they more courageous.

Yet the Marne will always have its special power to quicken the heart-beats of free peoples.

XIX

NANCY

SOME of Nancy's ardent annalists have sought to identify her with a town that Cæsar knew as Nasium; but better authority—and Roman remains—locate that place forty miles to westward. And the most scholarly of Nancy's historians have contented themselves with the admission that nobody knows where Nancy got her name nor when her castle was built. But in the twelfth century there seems to have been a feudal lord who called himself Drogo of Nancy; and after that the name of Nancy appears frequently in deeds and other documents relating to the dukes of Lorraine.

The first dukes lived principally at St. Dié, fifty miles away; but one of them built a priory near the castle at Nancy. And presently the small folk of the neighbourhood who fled to the castle for protection when a marauding party threatened must have become too numerous for shelter within the castle walls; so, greater walls were built about the castle and priory and the shops and dwellings that clustered about them —and a town came into being, just as hundreds of other towns did in the Middle Ages.

We know that Nancy was a walled and defended town about 1130, because then it sustained the first

siege of which we have authentic record. The Duke of Lorraine, who had been wounded in a small battle with the armed forces of one of his neighbours, took refuge in Nancy; the neighbour besieged the town; and the Duke saw himself in such a plight that he vowed he would go to Jerusalem, if Heaven would deliver him from this predicament. Straightway the attacking force fled in confusion, as if suddenly panic-stricken; and Nancy's first siege was over.

Perhaps it was this intervention that caused the dukes to make Nancy their capital—which they seem to have done soon afterwards; for there are coins extant which were minted at Nancy not many years later.

And presently the spirit of the age stirred in the people of Nancy, as it was stirring everywhere else; they began to have a great deal to say about their common safety and common well-being, and the making and administering of laws among them. But they must have been extraordinarily well-governed or easy to get on with, for it was almost one hundred and fifty years after charters had become the rule in neighbouring towns, that Nancy received from her Duke her grant of enfranchisement.

And they must also have been unusually capable and peaceable in their self-government; because, for more than a century after they embarked upon it, their town went on about its business so quietly that there is nothing in those years to chronicle. Other towns were having their charters revoked, were demanding restitution of them, and blood was flowing between commons and clergy, commons and feudal lords, commons and king. Not so at Nancy!

In 1407 Nancy suffered another siege. Louis,

Duke of Orleans, brother of the mad King Charles VI, espoused one side of a quarrel and the Duke of Lorraine embraced the other side. Whereupon, Louis declared war on Lorraine, and impudently sent a herald at arms to Duke Charles, telling him to prepare a grand dinner in his palace at Nancy for his enemies, who would soon be there. (This sounds like the braggadocio of five hundred and odd years later, when sundry Prussians were engaging themselves for August dinners in Paris.) Duke Charles sent back word that the dinner would be ready at the appointed time. It was! And it was served to a large and distinguished group of enemies—the only change in program being that they ate it not in the palace but in the dungeons of the Duke. Louis of Orleans was not present, but many of his friends and allies were.

Duke Charles was especially fond of Nancy, and did a great deal to enlarge and embellish it. The health of the inhabitants had long suffered from the swamps in the vicinity; and Charles caused those to be drained —to the great and lasting benefit of the town.

He seems to have been a wise as well as a spirited ruler; but his private life must have been the subject of reproachful talk; for we know that Jeanne d'Arc went to see him, and told him that Heaven would not fail to demand of him a reckoning for the way he was spending his days whilst his country lay a-dying.

Years afterwards when Jeanne had saved France and was dead in the flames at Rouen, her King, Charles VII, passed nearly a year at Nancy—or now at Nancy, now at Pont-à-Mousson—with his brother-in-law René, King of Sicily and of Anjou and Duke of Lorraine—directing the siege of Metz.

After that siege was terminated, the two kings and

brothers-in-law (Charles was married to Marie of Anjou, René's sister) returned to Nancy for the marriage ceremonies of René's daughter Margaret (Charles's niece) and Charles's nephew, King Henry VI of England (son of Charles's sister Katherine) who had been crowned king of France, at Notre Dame de Paris, and might have held the title but for the little Maid of Domrémy.

The tournaments and fêtes of all sorts signalizing that alliance were very splendid. Perhaps in your youth you pored, as I did, over the details that Agnes Strickland gives of them in her *Life of Margaret of Anjou.* The open-air events occurred in what is still called the "Place de Carrière," which was then surrounded with the splendid palaces of Lorraine nobles. Charles VII appeared in the lists more than once, and so did the bride's father, and many other personages royal and noble. But from contemporary accounts it would seem that more interest was aroused by the presence of Agnes Sorel than by that of any one else in all the glittering assembly. History deals gently with the memory of Agnes and accredits her with an influence over Charles VII almost, if not quite, altogether good. Perhaps her own day was no less cognizant of this, and judged her by the quality of what her beauty and charm inspired.

After eight days of jousting and feasting, the fifteen-year-old bride set out from Nancy for England, where she was to know so much unhappiness.

Charles VII accompanied her two leagues on her way, and parted from her with tears; then he returned to Nancy, his eyes swollen with weeping. Her father, King René, went with her as far as Bar—then he and his suite went back to Nancy.

In the month of June, 1456, more nuptial pageantries made Nancy very gay for three days, during which the "sumptuous embassy of nearly fifty nobles," sent by King Ladislas of Hungary to ask the hand of Charles VII's daughter Madeleine, tarried at Nancy for three days and was entertained by the Duke of Lorraine in the most magnificent manner. That Duke, however, was not René, but his son John.

John died in 1470; and on the second of August, 1471, his young son Nicholas made what they used to call the "solemn entry" into his capital. Probably he was born there and had lived there all his life; but on his assumption of the ducal crown he came into Nancy in great pageantry, from some other place in his domain.

All his nobles went before him in the full panoply of their estates, and as they approached Nancy they were met by a cortège composed of all the clergy, the magistrates, and the citizens of the town, and thus conducted to St. George's Church, where Nicholas took the oath "to maintain the rights and privileges of the churches and of the country."

To celebrate his accession, the young Duke ordered jousts and tourneys whose brilliant scenes lasted through many days; and there was much feasting and other merrymaking.

But the reign of this captivating young prince was of short duration. He died—of poison, it was said—July 17, 1473; and the mourning for him in Nancy was general and profound.

On his death the crown went to his cousin René, son of Duke John's sister Yolande and Ferry de Vaudemont who had a claim upon the duchy not by this marriage alone but by his descent from the dukes

who had governed Lorraine for nearly four hundred years.

Nothing could have been clearer than young René's title to the duchy of his forefathers. But that did not keep Charles the Bold, of Burgundy, from deciding to seize Lorraine for annexation to his own vast and splendid duchy. And thereby hangs the tale wherein Nancy plays her most familiar part in history.

Although he held some of his lands as vassal of the German Emperor, Frederick III, and some as vassal of the French King, Louis XI (his cousin and brother-in-law), Charles of Burgundy was rather more powerful than either, and richer. And he was aspiring to such further conquests that neither King nor Emperor would dare oppose his project of being crowned "Emperor of Belgian Gaul."

Charles had "no sooner" as an old chronicle puts it, "learned that Nicholas was gone from life into eternity, than, hoping to seize the duchy of Lorraine, which he ardently coveted, he made the young Duke prisoner."

But Louis XI was of no mind to let Charles succeed in this high-handedness—not because Louis had any scruples against such practices, but because he was more than sufficiently fearful and jealous of Charles already; and if anybody were going to snatch Lorraine, why should it not be Louis himself rather than his great vassal?

So Louis seized the person of a young nephew of Emperor Frederick. This princeling happened to be in Paris, and Louis put him in a safe place, then notified the Emperor that he would release this hostage as soon as Charles had restored Duke René to liberty.

However the Emperor presented the matter to Charles, Charles promptly yielded, and the young

Duke made his solemn entry into Nancy on the fourth of August, 1473.

Quite naturally he hated the Duke of Burgundy. But for many reasons he dissembled his hate.

When Charles was taking the body of his father, Philip the Good, to Dijon for interment, he had to go by way of Nancy; and Duke René came out of the city in great pomp and circumstance to meet the cortège and pay honour to his puissant neighbour. The two dukes "indulged in all sorts of caresses; and during two days Charles was feasted at Nancy with apparent cordiality."

But the Duke of Burgundy had scarcely left Nancy after this hospitality than he resumed his efforts at usurpation. "He led an army into Lorraine under the strange pretext of upholding the rights of the young Duke against those who should attempt to attack them."

In vain did young René write to Charles that his duchy was "full of peace." In vain did he supplicate Burgundy to withdraw its army.

Charles refused to negotiate with René except on condition that René join with him offensively and defensively against all their enemies.

Now René had no enemies (except Charles) and he had no stomach for being embroiled in all of Charles's quarrels. So he declined the alliance, reminding Burgundy that he was already an ally of the King of France and could not make any other alliance which might involve infidelity to that.

Then Louis persuaded René to declare war against Burgundy, and promised to render all help in his power. And on the other hand (in a quite literal sense!) there was the Emperor Frederick who ordered René not to permit the Bugundian troops to cross

Lorraine. So René, believing himself supported by the King of France and the Emperor of Germany, threw down the gauntlet to Charles the Bold.

We talk about this, now, as a figure of speech. But René actually did it, although by proxy. He sent a herald at arms to cast before Charles a blood-stained war-glove, emblem of defiance.

Heralds were pretty well protected by the code of chivalry. But the one who carried that gauntlet to Burgundy's great warrior Duke was distinctly nervous about it. He delivered his message as fast as he could, and was making all haste to effect his departure, when Charles the Bold called him back, and gave him a well-filled purse and some of his own sumptuous wearing apparel—as reward for the good news he had brought!

"Tell your master," was the characteristically impudent reply of Charles the Bold, "that I shall soon be in Lorraine."

Duke René, feeling strongly supported, was not frightened by this threat, and promptly laid siege to a Burgundian town, called Damvillers, about forty miles north of Verdun. He had some French troops with him. But when Charles the Bold was known to be marching to the defence of Damvillers, Louis XI suddenly decided that he did not care to fight Burgundy —and recalled his forces.

René would have been in a bad way, except for the arrival of some Swiss and Alsatian troops sent to him by towns leagued against the acquisitiveness of Charles the Bold.

He was at Pont-à-Mousson when he heard of the withdrawal of the French troops. (Pont-à-Mousson, of which we have heard so much in late years, is just seventeen and a half miles north of Nancy, on the great

Roman road into Belgian Gaul.) And when he learned that the Burgundian army was marching southward, he decided to concentrate his forces in Nancy and Epinal.

Nancy was put in a state of defence. Her suburbs were razed, all her trees for a considerable distance beyond the walls were cut down, great bulwarks were thrown up before the ports, to double-defend them, and artillery was set up on the walls.

Meanwhile on came the Burgundians, taking all before them. And on the twenty-fifth of October, 1475, they were before Nancy, which, after a month of bombardment and blockade, surrendered to them on November twenty-sixth.

Charles the Bold permitted all the Swiss and Alsatian soldiers to leave, with their arms and baggage, "and with all the honours of war." He agreed that the city should maintain its charter and all its ancient rights, and that the fortifications should not be touched.

On November thirtieth he made a triumphal entry into the city through the *Porte de la Craffe* (whose "pepper-pot" towers, portcullis, and other vestiges of mediævalism have, most fortunately, survived the recent bombardments), went to the Church of Saint-Georges to take the oath as Duke of Lorraine, and thereafter lodged himself in the ducal palace.

On the eighteenth of December he issued a call for the Three Estates of Lorraine to meet at Nancy on the twenty-seventh. (This was the parliament, made up of all the nobles, the higher clergy, and elected commoners.) When they were assembled, Charles told them that he had decided to make Nancy the capital of his vast realm, to defend and beautify the city, and maintain there a court of such magnificence as Europe had never seen.

After a grand review of his victorious troops, Charles set out on a new campaign, against the Swiss, leaving Nancy on January 11, 1476.

"In vain," says an old historian, "did the inhabitants of that rough-hewn country entreat him to respect their liberties and promise to become his faithful allies. Duke Charles, driven by fatality, would listen to nothing, and the second of March, 1476, he sustained, beneath the walls of Granson, a bloody defeat which was the first act of the terrible drama whose end brought ruin to Burgundian power and death to the great Duke himself."

There is a saying that at Granson Charles the Bold lost his "*mut, gut, und blut,*" or his wealth, his Providence, and his nerve. Certainly he seems to have lost whatever sanity he possessed. And the news of that reverse (the first of any great consequence that he had ever sustained) was no sooner spread abroad than many persons who hitherto had trembled at the mention of his name, straightway began to think of him as vulnerable.

That his promises of grandeur for Lorraine did not weigh against her people's love of liberty, was evidenced by the haste of many Lorraine nobles to take advantage of his defeat and overthrow his dominion over them.

Nancy seethed with revolt. But Charles was less concerned with that than with punishing the Swiss for daring to resist him.

Gathering himself together after the tragedy at Granson, on March second, he marched—in June—against Morat. (Granson is near the eastern end of Lake Neuchâtel, and Morat is on a little lake of the same name only a few miles east of Lake Neuchâtel. I once made a pilgrimage to Morat, which seems as if

it had changed not a whit in four or five centuries, and completed a tour of its walls, on a June day when the town was celebrating its repulse and defeat of Charles the Bold.)

When the Swiss saw that Charles was determined not to leave them alone, they sent to René, who was an exile at the court of Louis XI, imploring him to come and put himself at the head of their forces. René got four hundred French lancers, and permission to fight Burgundy.

The French troops again deserted him before he got into action; but he went on without them and arrived at Morat a few hours before the battle which ended the siege.

This second defeat of the bold Burgundian greatly encouraged the Lorrainers, and, under their young duke's personal leadership and direction, they laid siege to Nancy.

Hunger quickly reduced the Burgundian defenders who, after having lived for some days on the flesh of dogs and horses dead of starvation, demanded that the commandant surrender. In vain he pleaded with them that, if they would hold out for eight days longer, Charles would be there with relief. They were tired of starved dog, and they refused to stick to their posts. So the governor had to surrender; and on October sixth the Lorrainers re-took their capital.

That same day the Burgundian governor sent Duke René a horse-meat patty and told him that for some time he had had no other food. Whereupon René generously provided the whole Burgundian garrison with all sorts of food and drink.

The next morning the Burgundians, without their Duke, evacuated Nancy by that same *Porte de la Craffe*

whereby they had made their triumphant entry more than ten months before. René permitted them to take with them their arms and all their personal belongings.

They were scarcely outside the walls of Nancy when they were set upon by some Germans belonging to the army of Lorraine; and René had to hasten out and intervene "in duty to the rights of man," say the old French accounts of the siege. There was a code of chivalry in fighting—in those days, as now—and then, as ever, the Germans were outside of it.

René in person assisted his enemies to evacuate in dignity and without molestation. And when the retiring Burgundian commandant or governor was about to dismount and make his profound thanks to the young Duke, René motioned to him to keep his saddle, saying "Monsieur, I thank you very humbly for having so graciously governed my duchy. If you find it agreeable to remain with me, you shall have the same treatment as I myself have." To which the governor, M. de Bièvre, responded: "Monsieur, I hope that you do not hold against me any ill will on account of this war. I wish very much that Monsieur of Burgundy had never commenced it; and I fear that at the end he and we shall not live anywhere but shall be the victims of it."

But Charles the Bold had become Charles the Brash, and he was even then on his way thither, determined to retake Nancy. On October twenty-fifth he was back with a formidable army; and, for the third time in a year, Nancy was besieged—the third time on the anniversary of the first.

René went to Switzerland to get some mercenaries but he had difficulty in hiring men for winter fighting (and that was one of the severest winters Europe had

endured in many generations) and it was the fourth of January before he got back to the vicinity of his capital.

It was Saturday, and bitterly cold. That same day there had been a desertion from the Burgundian army of a Neapolitan *signor*, Campobasso, a soldier of fortune, who was *persona non grata* at home and went about with some followers selling his doubtful services wherever he thought the market was best. Campobasso had a grievance against Charles the Bold and on that Saturday he quit the Burgundian camp and went over to the Lorrainers, whom he had previously served.

Charles's humour was made worse than ever when he learned of this defection, and he determined, against all advice, to make an immediate attack on René. Accordingly he broke camp, early on Sunday morning, and marched towards the Lorraine army.

The battle began between ten and eleven o'clock, Sunday morning, and it was not long thereafter that Burgundy's great Duke, whose name had made all Europe tremble, realized that nothing remained to him save to die like a valiant knight, encouraging his men.

When he attempted to put on his helmet, a silver-gilt lion, which ornamented its crest, fell off.

"It is God's warning," said the stricken prince—and threw himself with greater abandon into the thickest of the *mêlée*. But nothing could arrest that rout; the Burgundians were in mad flight. And as Charles spurred his horse back towards the camp he had quitted so confidently only a few hours before, he was struck by a lance-thrust and unhorsed. His assailant was a Lorraine gentleman named Claude de Beaumont.

"Save the Duke of Burgundy!" Charles cried.

But Beaumont was deaf. He heard indistinctly

what was said, but he thought his victim cried "Long live the Duke of Burgundy." So he struck again, and cleaved the head of Charles—then passed on, not knowing whom he had killed.

That same evening René re-entered in triumph his capital. And, while he was receiving the congratulations of his people, in the ducal palace at Nancy, Campobasso brought to him a young page attendant upon Charles the Bold. This boy, Baptiste Colonna, said he had seen his master killed. And in the morning he conducted a searching party to the spot. There, indeed, lay the most magnificent prince in Europe, one among a thick-strewn mass of dead; his corpse had been stripped stark, and was fast frozen in the slime on the edge of a small pond. Beside it lay the body of that courteous and foreboding de Bièvre whom René had thanked for the gracious government of his duchy.

The two bodies were carried, with great ceremony of respect and regret, into Nancy, where Charles the Bold lay in state for six days. René went often to look upon his dead enemy, and in one of those visits he took the hand of the great Duke, saying: "Dear cousin, would to God that your misfortunes and mine had not made you thus."

On Sunday, January twelfth, a week after the battle, the Duke's body, embalmed and enclosed in a double coffin of wood and lead, was carried to Saint-Georges Church, where, a little more than a year before, Charles had taken the oath as Duke of Lorraine. There, with all the magnificence due his state, it was interred. All the other dead gathered from the battlefield were buried with military honours, and Duke René erected near their graves a memorial chapel which he called the Chapel of the Burgundians.

The pilgrimage Church of Bon-Secours stands on that spot today, and in it are the handsome tombs of the last Duke of Lorraine and his wife—of whom more, presently.

René lies in the Church of the Cordeliers, which he built, adjoining the ducal palace, to give Heaven praise for his victory over Charles the Bold.

And Charles, after sepulture for more than three-score years and ten in the church of Saint-Georges, has rested since 1550 in Notre Dame de Bruges, in a superb tomb of bronze gilt erected for him by his great-grandson, the Emperor Charles V. Beside him sleeps his lovely young heiress, Mary, upon whom burdens so heavy fell after that defeat at Nancy.

The spot where Charles's body was found is marked by the Cross of Burgundy. But about it is no longer the marsh that once was. A suburb covers the place now.

René did much to embellish Nancy, and his memory is warmly cherished there. He was the founder, in a sense, of the great family of Lorraine and Guise which played so big a part in history in the sixteenth century.

His second son, Claude, who married into the royal house of Bourbon, was the father of Mary of Lorraine —mother of Mary Queen of Scots—and of those cardinals of Lorraine and of Guise who had so much to do with Mary Stuart's early history.

René's eldest son, Antoine, won himself, in thirty-five years of benevolent rulership, the title of "the Good," and was succeeded by his son Francis, who died at the early age of twenty-eight and left as his heir a three-year-old infant who reigned as Charles III.

Charles was educated at the court of France, and was married, in Notre Dame, at Paris, to the Princess

Claude, one of the daughters of Henry II and Catherine de' Medici.

Notwithstanding his close relationship to Catherine and Charles IX and the Duke of Guise, he seems to have succeeded in keeping Lorraine free from the violent scenes of religious strife which made France so dreadful in the latter part of the sixteenth century and all through the seventeenth.

The eldest son of Charles III and Claude of France married Catherine de Bourbon, sister of Henry of Navarre; and that dashing sovereign went to Nancy, in 1603, to make a visit of some length, which was marked by the most magnificent festivities in his honour.

The relationships between the reigning house of Lorraine and the royal family of France continued to multiply.

Henry IV's sister gave her husband no heir; so the duchy passed to their daughter and her husband, who was also her first cousin. He, too, was educated at the court of France, along with Louis XIII and his brother Gaston of Orleans.

When Gaston fled France, on account of his differences with Richelieu, it was at Nancy that he took refuge, with his old school-fellow (so to speak) reigning as Charles IV. And there Gaston fell in love with Marguerite, Charles's sister, whom he married not only without consent of the King, his brother, but in defiance of the King's loud objections.

This brought on quarrels between Louis XIII and the Duke of Lorraine, which lasted for many years; during much of the time Charles was an exile. And when he effected with Louis XIV some sort of agreement which permitted him to return to Nancy, it was

conditional on Nancy being dismantled of all fortifications.

This practically made it a part of France, though it still had a century of nominal independence.

In 1729 Duke Leopold of Lorraine died—not at his capital, which France was occupying as a garrison city, but at Lunéville, seventeen and one-half miles east.

Leopold's son and heir, Francis, was at the court of Vienna. Louis XV thought that would be a good place for Francis to stay; so he made an arrangement to that end.

The Emperor of Austria had no son—only a daughter, Maria Theresa. He wanted to leave his possessions and his crown to Maria Theresa, but he knew that her tenure of them would depend very largely on the willingness of other monarchs to leave her in enjoyment of her inheritance. Louis XV was not agreeable to this plan—but he could be made so!

Louis had an indigent father-in-law on his hands—Stanislas, deposed King of Poland. He wanted a job for father; Lorraine had been, for a hundred and fifty years past, by alliances and otherwise, practically a part of France. Louis proposed that Stanislas be made Duke of Lorraine; and that after his death the duchy become a part of the kingdom of France. If the Emperor of Austria wanted his daughter to occupy his throne, he could marry her to the Duke of Lorraine, Francis, and get that young gentleman to abdicate his ducal throne for an imperial. Francis was not eager to abdicate, but the deal was finally put through by making him Grand Duke of Tuscany as well as co-ruler of the Austrian Empire. Some years later his daughter, Marie Antoinette, was Queen of France,—which then included her father's old duchy of Lorraine; but

Francis was in his grave. He was sincerely loved at Nancy, and deeply mourned there when death took him.

The situation of Stanislas was not a pleasant one. For seven hundred years the scions of one family had ruled Lorraine. The Polish interloper was about as alien to everything over which he was arbitrarily set as governor, as any one in all the world could well have been.

When he entered Nancy, "the city presented a picture of desolation rather than rejoicing. Many families had walled up the windows of their mansions, along the route that Stanislas would pass; nearly every one fled into the country to avoid witnessing an event which chilled all their sensibilities."

In spite of this inauspicious beginning, however, Stanislas made himself beloved in Lorraine, where his rule was mild and just and filled with accomplishments for the public good.

Nancy bears the impress of Stanislas more than of all its other rulers together.

He had magnificent ideas of city planning, and made Nancy one of the most beautiful capitals in Europe. Yet he was prudent, and far from prodigal in expense. France gave him a liberal allowance. He managed it so well that he was never in debt, never in need of money, yet had ample for his public improvements as well as for his private maintenance.

Of what he found at Nancy, not a great deal remains to our day.

The ducal palace was begun by René II, and finished in the reign of his son, Antoine. Its *Grande Porterie*, or main entrance, is one of the most beautiful doorways in Europe. In the bedchamber of Duke Antoine is his state bed, and seven tapestries, said to have been

taken from the tent of Charles the Bold after his death. (The great diamond which was among the effects lost by him at Granson is in the Louvre.) He went magnificently to war—did Charles! carrying four hundred tents hung with Flemish tapestries and Genoa velvets and Lyons brocades, and with much cloth of gold; and three hundred complete services of gold and silver plate, for the feasting of his nobles in the field. Philippe des Comines tells us much about these splendours. And the tapestries in Duke Antoine's room evoke strange reflections on the great Burgundian, upon whom one day's sun rose finding him in his majesty and pride, and set leaving him stark, even of his shift, the wolves gnawing ravenously at all that was left of his mortality.

The church that René built in praise for his victory over Charles is not in itself imposing (the fury of the Revolutionists left it very bare), but the ducal monuments which adorn it make it extremely interesting to the history-lover.

A little beyond the palace and church, towards the north, is the *Porte de la Craffe*, which has seen so much history for more than five centuries. And still farther in the same direction is a similar gate, the *Porte de la Citadelle*, in the walls built two centuries later to enclose a larger town.

The Hôtel de Ville was there when Stanislas came. (It has housed, latterly, the municipal collection of ancient and modern paintings.) The Cathedral was nearing completion, and the *Porte Saint-Georges*, facing it, had seen much more than a century of Nancy's eventfulness. The Church of St. Sebastian was new when Stanislas became Duke. And the *Porte Saint-Nicholas*, through which we ride to the Church of Bon-

Secours, is the one under which Stanislas often passed —the last time on his way to sepulture in the church he had built on the spot where the Burgundian dead lay buried.

Of Stanislas' taste and munificence there are many evidences.

The Place Stanislas is the centre of the modern town, and easily one of the most beautiful squares in Europe. It was laid out under his direction, surrounded with handsome buildings of uniform architectural style, and adorned with wrought-iron gateways, richly gilded, to each of the streets leading from the square. In the centre are two fountains and a statue of Stanislas replacing the one of Louis XV that he set up and the Revolutionists tore down. The theatre, the Hôtel de Ville, and the Episcopal Palace are some of the edifices around the square. The principal hotel of Nancy is another, and there are restaurants and cafés whose outdoor service, in the delightful French fashion, adds not a little to the gaiety of the place.

Close by is the Pepinière, or Tree Nursery, a beautiful park with an infinite variety of shade trees (France's only school of forestry is connected with the University of Nancy) to which there is access direct from the Place Stanislas. There are military band concerts in the Pepinière Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings in summer; and it is the wont of the band to play a sort of summoning number in the Place Stanislas before entering the park.

The *Porte Stanislas* and the *Porte Royale* were erected by Stanislas. The latter is now called the Arc de Triomphe and considered the handsomest of the seven triumphal arches at Nancy. It was erected in honour of Louis XV. Another of those seven arches

was erected by Louis XVI in 1785 doubly to commemorate the birth of the Dauphin and the alliance of France and the United States.

Nancy played an important part in the French Revolution, being one of the first cities whose garrison declared for the new régime. In 1870 the Prussians occupied it, and they did not withdraw until the last *sou* of "indemnity" was paid, in 1873. When they left, their frontier was moved westward to within twenty miles of Nancy, which thereupon became practically a border town and, though free from the German tyranny which fell so ruthlessly upon eastern Lorraine, was never free from the shadow of that sister in chains, nor from the threat of the barbarians' next raid.

In 1892 the Franco-Russian alliance was celebrated at Nancy, amid high hopefulness that thereby the German menace might be held at bay.

But as time wore on, those who were entrusted with the defence of France were made (most of them) to realize that their country must not put too much trust in the strength of her alliances; for the arrogance beyond the Rhine was of the sort that exceeds caution, that must flaunt itself at whatever risk.

Large numbers of Germans lived at Nancy, spying upon all that went on there and spreading disaffection in whatever ways they could. One of their favourite "sapping" methods was that of keeping the Lorrainers constantly reminded that their great heroine, Jeanne d'Arc, had been burned by the English. Against this smouldering resentment the Anglo-French alliance contended almost in vain for enthusiasm in Lorraine, until 1909, when Nancy held an International Exhibition and the London County Council and British Parliamentary delegation laid a wreath of flowers on the

equestrian statue of Jeanne d'Arc in the Place Lafayette. This act of tribute to their Maid was frantically cheered by the Lorrainers—to the Germans' great disgust.

In August, 1913, the celebrated Twentieth Army Corps, the "crack" unit of the French army and the pride not only of Nancy (where their headquarters were at the north end of the old Place de Carrière or tourney field) and of Lorraine, but of the nation, received a new commander: General Ferdinand Foch.

Foch in his youth had known Nancy under the German occupation, had heard its people taunted by German bands playing the *Retreat.* One of the first orders he gave when he took command, over forty years later, was that every one of the six bands attached to the Twentieth Corps turn out, on Saturday evening, August twenty-third, and flood the town with the martial airs dearest to French hearts: the *Marseillaise*, the *Sambre et Meuse*, and the *Marche Lorraine.*

Thereafter he devoted himself with all ardour to making Nancy a defensible bulwark against the German aggression which would, he felt sure, strike at France there.

The "Grand Couronné" of Nancy, or new girdle of defences, was begun under his direction in March, 1914; and though only a third of the plan was completed in August of that fateful year, it was sufficient to render inestimable aid to Foch in stopping the Bavarian army and preventing their spread across France south of the Marne to complete the envelopment of Joffre's retreating forces.

Nancy suffered frightfully from German bombardment and from air raids, though not so much as many other cities farther from the frontier.

As a place of pilgrimage she is destined to great favour

in the future, especially among Americans, few of whom will fail, if they go to France, to visit the vicinity where our men in the field of war, and our women in the fields of mercy, added so many shining memories to those which have for long centuries enriched the country round about Nancy.

XX

THE FIRST AMERICAN SECTOR

SOME years ago, before the war, a prominent Chicagoan was relating to me an overseas adventure of his on a motor journey of a year's duration from which he was just returned.

I asked him where the episode he was telling me about occurred.

"Oh," was his answer, "in a place no Americans ever go to or hear about, Toul."

"Why, I've been at Toul several times," I declared.

"The dickens you have!" he exclaimed, much surprised.

Well! there have been legions of Americans at and near Toul recently; and the name is no longer strange in anybody's ears.

The reason that the name of Toul did not suggest much, until lately, to the majority of Americans is that the ancient town had not made much history for several centuries past; and of that which it so abundantly made during many earlier centuries, very little concerns persons or events widely known by the generality of readers.

There is an old French description of the country of which Toul is a part, that is so aptly phrased and so

freshly pertinent that I cannot refrain from translating a few sentences of it:

Beyond the dreary and monotonous plains of Champagne [it says] the traveller towards the east descries a chain of verdant mountains which he hails with gladness, even from afar. These mountains are the Argonnes—the last rampart that Providence has placed on the route of Germanic invasion. On this side is France. On that is the eternal battlefield of the Gallic and Germanic races.

At the feet of the Argonnes, from south to north, flows the Meuse. A little farther away rises another mountain range, parallel to the first but more easily traversable and connecting the Argonnes with the Vosges. Still beyond stretches the delectable valley of the Moselle, rich in all the treasures that the earth can give to man.

On the banks of the Moselle lived, long ago, two tribes of the Belgians whom Cæsar placed foremost among the people of Gaul. Ceaselessly exposed to the attack of the Germans, these people developed as their very exceptional situation demanded.

Always in arms to defend their territory menaced by a tireless enemy, who lived only to make war, these Belgians had to habituate themselves determinedly to an existence which they probably would not have chosen, but which destiny imposed on them—to become, indeed, the sentinel and advance guard of the Gallic race to which they were attached by ties of consanguinity, and against the Germanic race which they were forever repulsing obstinately.

At the point where the Moselle, after having flowed almost directly from south to north, makes a great bend towards the Meuse, lies the town of Toul, just where Cæsar found it.

He speaks of it in his *Commentaries*, and says that

he could count on the friendliness of its people and on their aid in provisioning his army.

The town was sacked in turn by the Goths, the Burgundians, the Vandals, and the Huns, and then was conquered by the Franks, in 450.

The kings of France's first dynasties had many residences in the vicinity, and spent much time there in the enjoyment of hunting and fishing. There are extant many records of Charlemagne's connection with the neighbourhood.

When his vast empire was divided among his grandsons, by the Treaty of Verdun, in 843, Toul fell to the share of the eldest, Lothair, and became part of that *Lotharii regnum* which later came to be called Lorraine.

Lothair kept his grandfather's imperial title, retained the sovereignty of Italy, and carved out for himself that big section of land from the Mediterranean to the North Sea along the Rhine and Rhone valleys, w ich he called Lotharingia or Lorraine. His brother, Louis, received the German part of Charlemagne's empire, and their half-brother, Charles the Bald, was given France west of Lorraine.

Lothair I left Italy and the imperial title to his eldest son, Louis, and Lorraine to his second son, Lothair II.

This second Lothair spent nearly all his energy throughout his reign trying to get a divorce from his queen, who had been forced on him in political marriage, so he could wed a woman he greatly loved. He died unsuccessful and without an heir; whereupon his kingdom was divided between his uncles Charles the Bald and Louis the German.

Louis got Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, Utrecht, Strasbourg, Bâle, Treves, Metz, "and all the territory which depended on those important towns."

Charles got Toul, Verdun, Cambrai, Besançon, Lyons, Vienne, Usez, Hainault, and the greater part of the Netherlands (what we now call Holland and Belgium).

But even that was too much for one man of the breed of Charlemagne's feeble successors to govern, and within half a century it was broken up into a great number of small estates, continuously at war with one another and acknowledging allegiance (of a sort) now to the king of France and now to the emperor of Germany according as the tide of battle flowed or as their sense of policy inclined them.

Among these semi-free, semi-dependent small states were what were called *les Trois Évêchés*, or Three Bishoprics, of Metz, Verdun, and Toul—three cities with their surrounding and dependent country. Metz comprised an area of about 150 square leagues (375 square miles), Toul twenty-five square leagues, and Verdun sixty.

The three bishoprics did not communicate, but were separated by divers small estates of the duchies of Lorraine and Bar. But "their homogeneity," as an old Metz historian wrote, "was not one of material things, it was wholly mental, spiritual,—a kinship of common tastes, ideals, customs—and, above all, of consanguinity."

Dynastic jugglings gave those people the German emperor for supreme overlord.

When that emperor was of Charlemagne's blood, it may not have mattered so much whether the first or second or third of three brothers reigned over this border country. But Louis the German rapidly became Germanized. Before his reign ended he had forgotten the speech of his young manhood, and could neither understand his western kindred no reply to them.

In the middle of the tenth century the Huns penetrated into Lorraine, and burned Toul. And the Bishop of Toul, though he had been an ardent enemy of German domination and only recently won over from his forlorn hope, was able to persuade the German Emperor to rebuild Toul at the expense of the royal treasury.

A century later another Bishop of Toul was elected Pope and is thenceforth known in history as Leo IX.

His successor in the bishopric of Toul was named Udo; and so energetic a prelate was he that I think he merits a place in our brief outline—so we may understand what bishops found to do, besides fast and pray, in those stirring times.

They were great days for bandits. When everyone —more or less—was engaged in taking what he could find and keeping what he could hold, it must have been a little difficult to designate some as professional bandits in distinction from the amateurs who found fewer occasions for banditry. Perhaps it was a matter of admission: some operated openly as cutthroats and outlaws, and others plied the same trade under various pretexts.

At any rate, the vicinity of Toul was particularly pestered by the rapacities of a robber band directed by the lord of the castle at Vaucouleurs, some twelve miles south and west of Toul. This band did not content itself with stripping travellers of what they had with them; it seized their persons and held them, for rich ransoms, in the robber castle at Vaucouleurs.

Udo determined to put an end to this. He summoned his armed force and besieged the castle. But the sire of Vaucouleurs got the aid of some neighbouring counts who were, for reasons of their own, interested in the "rights" of robbers; and the Bishop had to raise his siege and take himself off.

After that, the bandits waxed bolder than ever. And Udo

resolved to make, at any price, an end of his untoward neighbours. He bought the aid of the Duke of Lorraine and of the Count of Bar, and after three months of continual attacking, which he always directed in person, the bellicose prelate took Vaucouleurs with a strong force, burned the château, and razed the ramparts. This fortunate expedition put an end to the brigandage from which the people of Toul had been constant victims.

This done, Udo turned his attention to matters of another sort. The Count of Toul was a bandit and would not admit it. When Udo remonstrated with him for his robbery of the people of Toul, he retorted that, as he called his exactions "taxes," nothing could be done about them.

Couldn't it? Udo called together an assembly of the nobles and clergy and solemnly deposed the Count, despoiling him of his title and of his prerogatives.

In the history of Toul for the next three hundred years or so, I find nothing which seems to me of probable interest to the generality of readers until we come to the days when Jeanne d'Arc passed and re-passed through the city on her way to and from Nancy. It was at Toul that the little Maid of Domremy had her first sight of France's great churches, of which she was soon to see so many and to leave on each of them her impress stronger than that of any other personage ever associated with them through all their eventful centuries.

St. Gengoult and St. Etienne, at Toul, were both there, already venerable, in Jeanne's day; the glorious thirteenth-century glass awed her as it awes us. She may have walked in St. Étienne's lovely cloisters.

She left no outstanding memory of her transits through Toul. But every place thereabouts has its special pride in being of the district that gave her to France and to the world.

Toul is about fourteen miles due west of Nancy. Fourteen miles farther west, the road crosses the ancient highway north and south—the route to Verdun, thirty-six miles north, and to Neufchâteau, twenty-five miles south.

Domremy is seven miles north of Neufchâteau. It is a tiny village through which the Meuse meanders sluggishly, no bigger than a rivulet or creek.

Jeanne d'Arc's birthplace is on the edge of the hamlet and is the most pretentious of Domremy's dwellings. It is a two-story structure of stone and weathered stucco, guarded by lofty trees whose lowest branches cast their flickering shadows on the sunlit walls.

Over the doorway are the royal arms of France and those granted to Jeanne's brothers and their descendants. And above these, in a Gothic niche, is a kneeling figure of the Maid of France, said to date from 1456, when there would still have been at Domremy many persons who clearly remembered her. (She herself at that date would have been only four-and-forty.)

The room on the left as one enters is said to be the one where Jeanne came into the world. Its low ceiling is heavily raftered in age-blackened oak; and there is a huge fireplace beneath a hooded chimney.

One easily imagines the parents of Jeanne and others of her relatives sitting about the fire there, talking in awed tones of the far places she was gone to and the great events in which she was taking a leading part. Yes, and one as easily sees her there, gazing into the flames without any prevision of the fire in Rouen market-place!

Small and cell-like is the little chamber which they tell us was her own, with rude, heavy beams, rough plastered walls, and a wee window which may or may not have been cut in the thick walls when she was living there.

Upstairs there is a small collection of books, pictures, and other things pertaining to the Maid, including casts of many of the statues made of her. (And, as practically every church in France has a shrine to her, and many cities have monuments to her, she is easily the most-sculptured personage in the whole realm of history, with one or two exceptions in sacred story.)

In the yard, shaded by the same tall trees that overhang the house, is a white marble monument representing France putting the sword into Jeanne's hand.

The church where Jeanne was baptized, and where she so often prayed to God, is close by her home—her other home! It probably looks little different today than when she knelt there for the last time—except for the memorials of her.

The oak forest where she heard the voices of St. Michael, Ste. Margaret, and Ste. Catherine is about three quarters of a mile from the village, on an eminence which now is crowned by a memorial basilica with a high and ornate tower.

I was, somehow, less moved by this costly and pretentious edifice than by many another far more humble effort to honour her whom nothing can further glorify. But others may feel differently about it.

There was to be a national monument to Jeanne d'Arc at Vaucouleurs, thirteen miles north, on the site of that castle of the Sire de Baudricourt, to whom Jeanne vainly applied for aid to go to Chinon, where the

Dauphin was; but when I was last there (in 1913) it was still principally in projection.

But I didn't care. For the Porte de France is there, through which Jeanne rode away to save France when Baudricourt had refused to help her and the peasants of his village had supplied her with equipment and escort. Nothing will ever be built to memorialize her which can thrill the beholder as that ancient gateway does.

When the war between Lorraine and Burgundy brought Charles the Bold down into that country, Toul tried very hard to maintain a "safety first" neutrality. It couldn't refuse to receive Charles when he signified his need of passing that way, and it even went so far as to give him a magnificent reception; but he was permitted to bring inside the city walls only fourteen knights—all the rest of his army had to be lodged in the suburbs at his expense.

After Nancy had fallen to Duke Charles, its dispossessed duke, René, hastened to warn Toul that Charles was planning to take that city too.

So Toul gathered together a small defence army—which angered Charles. He demanded an explanation of this violation of neutrality; and though it was a lame one, and he wasn't deceived by the pleas of "self-defence," he accepted it—at least for the time being. What he might have done later can only be conjectured; for he perished, soon afterwards, beneath the walls of Nancy.

In 1498 Toul was visited by the Emperor Maximilian, Charles's son-in-law. In 1544 Maximilian's grandson, Charles V, was there, a guest of the city, whilst his imperial army was encamped beneath the walls.

Toul was apparently loyal to her liege lords, the emperors. But her heart was not with them.

In September, 1546, Toul learned that a French army was about to invade the Three Bishoprics. They were ordered to defend themselves against the invaders; but they were eager for release from the German yoke.

The Duke of Guise came to Toul in March, 1548, and held secret conferences with those known to be inclined towards France. And finally on the twelfth of April, 1552, Henry II entered Toul, followed by five hundred knights and seven thousand men-at-arms. Two days later he took his departure, so assured of the city's feeling towards his sovereignty that he left behind a garrison of only five hundred men to guard his interests there.

The religious wars were bitter at Toul, as they were almost everywhere. But no event of general interest took place there for three hundred and sixty-odd years, except that it was taken by the Germans in 1870.

Since 1874 it has been a fortress of the first class. A ring of forts surrounds the town—a ring nearly thirty miles in circumference. And beyond those stretch other forts all up and down the eastern frontier.

The town itself is walled in the modern manner. Oval in form, it lies behind its grassy ramparts; and though they are far more formidable than the stone bastions of mediæval and earlier times, Toul thinks less of them as her protection than of her two girdles of forts far beyond. Northwards, along the Meuse, those forts extend to Verdun. Eastward they reach past Nancy.

The garrison there was always large in peace times. I never knew the vicinity when it was not swarming with soldiers. One "felt the frontier" there as at

few other places, it seemed to me. Although, travelling by road as we did, many things were part of our every-day consciousness of which the average traveller by rail is seldom or never made aware.

Fourteen miles west of Toul, on the great Roman highway, is Void, where there was a very important castle, centuries ago, guarding the junction of the main routes east and west and north and south.

One turns south at Void to go to Vaucouleurs and Domremy, and north to go to St. Mihiel and Verdun.

The way north leads through Commercy, where the dukes of Lorraine had an imposing château in the seventeenth century (now a barracks), and seventeen miles north of the cross-roads we come to St. Mihiel.

There isn't a great deal to say about St. Mihiel before this war—not a great deal, that is, which would interest many Americans. The town has a long history, which is of interest to students rather than to the general public with time for only the outstanding facts of bygone days.

However, many things for which there was not, aforetime, room in the busy lives about us, have suddenly taken on new significance as part of the one-time background of a khaki-clad man who epitomizes to you or to me America fighting in France.

St. Mihiel (which spelling grew out of the Lorraine way of pronouncing St. Michel) was founded at the beginning of the eighth century by a Count of Moselane, named Vulfoalde.

That worthy owned some relics of St. Michel by which he, as some folks would say, "set great store." Everywhere that Vulfoalde went, the relics were sure to go, carefully wrapped and piously carried in a sort of purse which was the special charge of Vulfoalde's chaplain.

One day, on a hunt, the Count's party halted in a lovely wooded dale watered by a sparkling brook which had its source in the mountains whose feet it bathed. The charming spot was not far from the bank of the Meuse, about twenty miles below Verdun, and still bore the Roman name, Castellio, which indicated that the Romans had had there a fortified place, probably on one of the mountains.

The hunting party doubtless enjoyed a very good repast in that lovely dell, and probably had excellent wine to drink. And when they remounted and rode off to resume the chase, the chaplain left those precious relics hanging on a bough.

They had gone some distance before he discovered his loss. Then everybody went galloping back.

There the purse hung as he had left it. But every time a hand was put out to take it the branch flew out of reach. They knew how to interpret such behaviour in those days, and Vulfoalde hastened to make a vow that he would build there a monastery in honour of St. Michel. Whereupon the bough bent down and laid the relics at the Count's feet.

So impressed was Vulfoalde that he built not only the promised monastery and church, but two other churches—one under the special favour of his Countess and one that was specially his own.

A century later the original site was abandoned and a new abbey was built on the bank of the Meuse, where, little by little, a town grew up around it. A castle was built there in 1085, and the abbey bought it during the next century.

But it had an importance more than ecclesiastical. As early as the beginning of the fourteenth century it was a judiciary headquarters for all the country round

about, and evidently of fiscal eminence, too—for it was a seat of coinage. It was at St. Mihiel, in 1419, that René of Anjou was recognized as Duke of Bar, and that the *parlement* of his new duchy ratified his union with Isabella, sole heiress of her father, Duke Charles II of Lorraine.

St. Mihiel became a part of France in 1635, after a siege directed by Louis XIII in person. (It had, of course, been French until, in the division of Charlemagne's empire, it fell into kingly hands unable to hold it, and eventually passed thence into the control of a feudal lord—the Duke of Bar.)

The fury of the French Revolution was very great at St. Mihiel, and its mad mobs destroyed the famous abbey, its church, six convents, and many other beautiful memorials of the past.

In one thing, however, the town was more fortunate than most towns in the blind fury of this war: the library of the monks was saved, and made the nucleus of a town library.

In what remained of those portions added to the abbey in the seventeenth century, the municipal offices are now (or were) located.

At Commercy the main road north to Verdun and Sedan is crossed by another broad and ancient highway coming from Metz.

Twenty-five miles north-east of Commercy, on this Metz road, is Pont-à-Mousson. The savants who have browsed in the archives of old Lorraine declare that "the origin of this pretty little town is modern enough"—which means, they go on to say, that we have no definite knowledge of it earlier than the ninth century.

We know, from old titles at Toul, that in 896 there

was a bridge over the Moselle at this place, and a little town at one or both bridgeheads.

There used, centuries ago, to be a church on the bridge. And there were three hospices in the town, which was (on this account) a favourite resort for pilgrims—or, perhaps, it was t'other way about.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century the town began to spread on the west bank of the river also.

Sieges and occupations without number has it known. And there have been many disastrous overflowings of the Moselle.

Above the town is the mountain (or hill) of Mousson with a little village still surviving at the foot of a castle whose known history goes back to the eleventh century —although Roman remains indicate that this was a fortified hilltop very early in our era.

There is one story about that castle which deserves re-telling.

In 1113 the German Emperor, Henry V, having made prisoner the castle's lord, the Count of Bar, came to take the castle. He brought the captive Count with him.

The Countess was "within." Instead of yielding to the Emperor's demands that she surrender, she put up an unexpectedly vivacious resistance.

Whereupon Henry erected a gibbet outside the castle walls, and threatened the Countess that if she did not open her castle gates to him, she should gaze over them at her husband swinging on the gibbet's arm.

That night the Countess brought a son into the world. And the next day she sent word to the Emperor that there was a new Count of Bar and he could do what he wished with the old one!

This so infuriated Henry that he ordered the hang-

ing to take place. But all his lords and gentlemen interceded so ardently for the prisoner that his life was saved.

At this provoking point the ancient chronicle stops, and leaves us to imagine as best we're able what "the old one" said to his loving spouse when they were reunited.

In 1492 an accident set fire to the powder magazine of the castle and it was almost entirely destroyed. But it was rebuilt and in 1567 gave asylum to the Prince of Condé and the Admiral Coligny, leaders of the Huguenots.

Now let us go back to Void and "pick up" again the road to westward.

Fifteen miles west of Void is Ligny, on the little Ornain River and the great Marne-Rhine Canal. The road from Neufchâteau, thirty-six miles south-east, crosses the east-and-west highway here.

If we turn north-west at Ligny and keep to this road and to the river and canal, we shall come, at about nine miles, to Bar-le-Duc which has played so large a part in history for two thousand years that the chief association with its name ought not to be its far-famed jelly of seeded currants and strained honey.

This that we are traversing was the great Roman highway between Toul and Reims; and it was probably the Romans who established as a way station the village from which Bar grew. It was a little group of houses "by the side of a road" and at the foot of a hill whereon a Roman camp was perched.

When the barbarians from over the Rhine destroyed some of the neighbouring villages, their inhabitants fled for protection to the Roman camp and station; and in grateful memory of the security they found there

and the barrier against farther advance of the savages, the refugees gave their refuge the name of Bar—which was their Gallic word for barrier.

In 496, Clovis, going from Toul to Reims to be baptized into the Christian faith, came along this road, which was the only route traversable between those points.

The dwellers at Bar must, indeed, have seen many a notable passing, and entertained—probably overnight—a succession of persons going and coming between Rome and the provinces of Gaul. But if any event of historic importance occurred there during the Merovingian dynasty, we have no record of it.

There was a castle at Bar in those days. It was built at the foot of the mountain, or hill, which dominates the town; and it seems to have belonged, about the year 700, to that Count of Mosellane, Vulfoalde, who founded the abbey of St. Mihiel, twenty-two miles away.

From that castle, in 828, Louis the Debonair dated some letters-patent confirming a grant to the abbey of Montier-en-Der near St. Dizier. The heir of Charlemagne's vast empire may have been sojourning there, or he may have been stopping for a night en route. We do not know what was the status of the castle at Bar; but we find a bit of territory designated as Bar especially mentioned in the redivision of lands between Charles the Bald and Louis the German, in 870.

In the second half of the tenth century there was a Frederic, Count of Bar, to whom the southern part of Lorraine was given in fief with the title of Duke of Mosellane. He built a strong fortress on the mountain at Bar, exchanged some lands belonging to his wife for others near his new castle, and called himself thenceforth the Duke of Bar.

Son and grandson succeeded him. Then there was no male heir—only two heiresses. One of these was Sophie, a valiant and remarkable woman who married the Count of Mousson. He was a feeble person who did not dare to assume the title of duke. And in consequence there were no more dukes of Bar for several hundred years—only counts.

It was the great-grandson of Sophie who came so near being hanged at Pont-à-Mousson and whose subsequent history gives no one any reason to rejoice at his escape.

The "new Count of Bar" who was born that night when the gibbet awaited his father, grew up to be a Crusader knight and to distinguish himself at the siege of Damascus whither he went in company with King Louis VII.

He augmented his inheritance by his marriage with Agnes of Champagne. Their eldest son was killed at the side of Richard Cœur de Lion on the terrible day of Arzur, in 1192. His brother became Count of Bar, and under him the countship of Bar was the equal of the duchy of Lorraine. Thus, rather than in crusading, he employed his zeal. But his son and successor "took the Cross" late in his days, and perished in the battle of Gaza, in 1239.

Bar waxed in extent and power until it became a sort of arbiter between Lorraine and Champagne. Then a count of Bar wedded a daughter of King Edward I of England, espoused the quarrels of the latter against the French King, Philip the Fair, was made prisoner and taken to Bruges, where, after two years of captivity, he gained his liberty by signing a treaty the most disastrous in the annals of Bar.

The county lost a great deal of its proud independence

then, and passed more and more under the sceptre of France until, half a century later, it was King John of France who raised it again to a duchy in favour of a vassal who later became his son-in-law.

The fortunes of the dukes of Bar are of no special interest to the generality of readers until we come to that romantic figure, René of Anjou, who became Duke of Bar in 1419, married Isabelle, the sole heiress of Lorraine, and merged Bar for ever with his wife's inheritance.

It was in René's day that Bar witnessed a strange execution: a cat which had strangled an infant was hanged on the gibbet; for the ancient laws of Bar held animals to moral accountability.

After the union of the two duchies, Nancy was the capital rather than Bar. Nevertheless, the older town saw much of royal splendour. Francis I was there in 1517 to act as godfather to the son of Duke Antoine. Francis II was there, with Marie Stuart, during their brief reign. Charles IX came to Bar to hold at the baptismal font his nephew, the new heir of Lorraine, whose mother was Claude of France. The festivities on this occasion lasted nine days.

On the 10th of May, 1770, the fourteen-year-old Austrian archduchess, Marie Antoinette, coming to France to wed the young Dauphin, was entertained at Bar.

These are some of the pages out of the old town's past. There are many, many others too numerous to cite.

The surviving memorials of that past are many, considering the violent episodes that have been part of its history.

There are the upper town and the lower town. The

latter contains the principal business places, and two interesting old churches of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The former, where the successive castles stood, below the remains of the Roman camp, has some picturesque old houses and the fine fourteenth century church of St. Étienne.

XXI

METZ

RESTORED to France after a martyrdom of nearly half a century, Metz resumes her place with a gladness which no one can appreciate who does not know more than a little of her long history.

Cæsar found a Belgic capital here, well defended; he respected the quality of resistance he met in these people, and they seem to have been of a philosophic mind about Roman conquest—for, when they were unable to fight it off, they accepted it with such "solid and sincere friendliness" that the Romans gave them many privileges at home and abroad, and many of the warriors of this tribe (the Mediomatrikes) became Roman legionaries.

Under the rule of imperial Rome the city that we call Metz (and that they called Divodurum) became rich and splendid. Palaces replaced the huts of Gallic rudeness; great temples were builded to the gods of Rome; baths, theatres, and other luxuries abounded; an aqueduct, traces of which remain, brought great volumes of fresh water. Five military highways converged there and brought a constant flux of commercial, administrative, and army travel.

Then came a dreadful day which Tacitus tells about: a division of Roman troops coming from the heart of the empire to contest the claim of Galba, the Gaul

as emperor, was received at Divodurum, with loyal acclaim and given "brotherly hospitality"; when, suddenly, the soldiers from afar turned upon their entertainers and massacred four thousand defenceless persons, without pity.

This might well have turned the Mediomatrikes against Rome; but it didn't. On the contrary, later in that same year, when Civilis was rallying Gauls to overthrow the Roman power, the Mediomatrikes not only refused to join in what they called his perfidy, but did all they could to recall from their defection those tribes Civilis had been able to seduce.

There was sturdy stuff in those people who had founded Metz.

Two centuries later their city was sacked, its citizens massacred, in a German invasion; and what those barbarians left, with what was rebuilt after their visitation, Attila destroyed.

Again a city rose from the ashes, and if it was not magnificent, as before, it must have been a stout fortress; for it was the last bulwark of Roman power in Gaul, and submitted to Clovis only the year before his death.

It was at Divodurum (or Metz, as we may now call it) that Brunehilda of Spain was married to Siegbert and entered upon that stormy career of which we have made mention in our chapter on Laon. She was much at Metz and embellished the city (her capital) with many palaces and religious edifices.

Pepin the Short was partial to Metz as a place of residence after he became king; and it was in his palace there that the envoys of the Eastern emperor were entertained through the winter after having presented him with their sovereign's gift: the first

organ brought to Western Europe. (This was received by Pepin at Compiègne and given to an abbey there.)

Charlemagne also spent no little time at Metz and at Thionville, seventeen miles north. It was at the latter place that his wife, Hildegarde, died, in the springtime of 783, her body being taken to Metz for burial in the abbey of Saint-Arnould to which Charlemagne made a rich gift on condition that the monks keep lamps continually lighted on Hildegarde's tomb and prayers be perpetually said for the repose of her soul. He also established a school at Metz, and introduced the Gregorian chant into the church service there.

Louis the Debonnaire was brought to Metz on his way to Compiègne to be despoiled of his crown by an assembly of bishops who condemned him to a hair-shirt and a cell. And to Metz he returned after he was freed. The Chris mas holidays of 834 were spent by this unhappy monarch in his palace at Metz; and it was in the cathedral of Metz that he was solemnly recrowned. At this ceremony the Bishop of Reims, Ebbo, who had presided over the assembly at Compiègne which ordered the Emperor's humiliation, was obliged to read from the pulpit a condemnation of that assembly's behaviour; and afterwards a tribunal of forty-three bishops adjudged him unworthy of his office. But Louis had the magnanimity to overrule this decision and restore Ebbo to his high estate.

Thereafter Metz was the principal residence of Louis, to whom the inhabitants were always faithful, regardless of the plots and open wars of his greedy and rebellious sons.

Louis died on a defensive campaign against his third son, whom history called Louis the German; his body was brought to Metz and interred beside

that of his mother in the abbey of Saint-Arnould. His sarcophagus was sold, in 1794, when kings were in such extreme disrepute in France, to a marble-cutter who utilized its elaborately carved surfaces, depicting the crossing of the Red Sea, for chimney-breasts.

In the partition of Louis's empire, Metz was the capital of the vast share which fell to the eldest son, Lothair; and when Lothair subdivided his inheritance amongst his three sons, Metz was in the realm of Lothair II, *Lotharii regnum*, which subsequently became *Lotharingia*, then *Lorraine*. Metz continued to be the capital; and thither came Louis the German and Charles the Bald, in 867, to confer with their nephew, Lothair II, about the Norman invasions. What they principally did, however, was to hold a secret interview in the abbey of Saint-Arnould, close to the bones of their father, and discuss how they would divide between them the lands of their nephews, Louis and Lothair, neither of whom had an heir.

Lothair learned of this interview, and went to Rome to complain to the Pope against his greedy uncles. But the Pope was wroth with Lothair because of the latter's efforts to get a divorce. A great difference in the history of Lorraine might have resulted if Lothair had been permitted to legitimatize his offspring by Valdrade. But he died unsuccessful in that attempt, and his uncles rended his patrimony. Charles kept Toul and Verdun, and Louis the German got Metz.

Thus Metz passed under the nominal control of Germany in 870; but "nominal" it was indeed. Sometimes it obeyed the emperor; sometimes it defied him; and once it made an emperor of its own.

This latter was in the times of Hildebrand and Henry IV. The Bishop of Metz, although he owed his eleva-

tion to the emperor, became one of the most ardent supporters of the Pope in his demand that all investitures be made by the Holy See. Metz may not have sided with the Emperor, but it was against the Pope —and chased the Bishop out. The Bishop was, like most bishops, a politician. The Pope (evidently) profited him nothing in the way of another job; so he went back under the other banner, and was one of the Council of Worms which declared Hildebrand (Gregory VII) no longer Pope. As if Hildebrand cared! When the Bishop of Metz saw how small effect the declaration of the Worms Council had at Rome, he seems to have decided that after all his bread was buttered on the Vatican side. So he flopped again; and again he was chased out of Metz, this time by the Emperor's orders. In revenge for this he managed to get a native of Metz, a warrior in his own pay, named emperor; and for four years this tool of the expedient Bishop of Metz was actually recognized by the papal party as head of the German Empire, in denial of the rights of Henry IV whom Hildebrand had excommunicated. When Hildebrand died, the "emperor" from Metz hastened to abdicate and "to seek in his native town the repose which he had lost." And there he was permitted to spend his few remaining years, shepherded by his old master, the Bishop.

My chronicle of these events is by M. de Saulcy, a member of the Institute of France some seventy years ago, a professor of mechanics in the artillery and engineering school at Metz, and an authority on Lorraine history. He does not say by whose authority the volatile Bishop of Metz held his office for five years after Hildebrand died; nor how it happened that Henry IV permitted both the Bishop and his tool to

live on there until death came decorously to them, in due time. It wasn't because he felt any lack of authority there. For when the Bishop died, Henry, without consulting the people of Metz, gave them in spiritual charge to a relative of his. The Messins (as the people of Metz call themselves) would have none of the Emperor's relation. They not only protested, but repudiated him and elected the man of their own choice.

"In vain," says M. de Saulcy, "did the Emperor confiscate the properties of the bishopric, and the Duke of Lorraine ravage the country round about; the people of Metz were determined to conserve at any cost their independence, and to take account neither of the Emperor's orders nor of the depredations of the Duke of Lorraine."

So that was, probably, the reason why the man who presumed to the imperial throne, and the Bishop who set him there, lived on in Metz till they died in their beds, sedately and without hastening from Henry IV.

After the shepherd of their own choice died, the Messins—moved by what spirit I know not—accepted the Emperor's relative; and a very good ruler he proved to be; so devoted to the common folk and their rights that he was accused by Rome of caring more for the popular interests than for the Church, and was deposed at a council held at Reims. But the Messins cared not a whit for councils. They had found this Bishop to their liking, after all, and they would not give him up. The clergy of Metz were members of the Church of Rome, and not of the commune of Metz. They elected a new bishop, an estimable old man whom the Messins venerated. But he was not permitted to enter the city. Then the Pope intervened, and made his nephew bishop of Metz. The Messins smiled and

said he could be bishop on the outside of their town walls—not within.

It makes no difference now, to you and me, who was and who could not be bishop of Metz. But these episodes serve to show us what manner of folk the Messins were in the eleventh century—just as the story of the Roman massacre after Nero's death and the Mediomatrikes' refusal to join Civilis against Rome shows what sturdy spirit was theirs in the first century.

When the Second Crusade was preached, the Messins decided that instead of seeking forgiveness and fortune in Syria, they would stay home and work for a republic. The Count of Metz and some ecclesiastics were going on the Crusade; but the people felt that they had not a heart nor a pair of arms to spare for such far enterprise. And their Bishop (although he was that nephew of the Pope whom they had at first refused and finally accepted only when their own man was called to a court position) sagely decided that this was a pretty good time to stay at home and aid his people in their moves for more independence.

So, while other folk were fighting in Palestine for something they could scarcely have defined if asked to do so, the Messins set up a republic consisting of their city and two hundred and forty villages neighbour thereto.

The seigneurs of those parts resisted, of course. They were skilled warriors, and the townsfolk were not; and when the seigneurs enticed the townsfolk beyond their walls, and fell upon them, more than two thousand citizens of the new republic were killed. "Then the popular fury knew no bounds, and the expulsion or extermination of the seigneurs was sworn."

Again the people of Metz foreswore vengeance. This

time it was the pleading of Saint Bernard that inclined their hearts to forgiveness and the seigneurs' hearts to conciliation and to recognition of the republic.

At first the republic was administered under a chief magistrate elected for life. But soon this was changed, and the chief magistrate was elected each year; this, as an ancient document dated 1179 tells us, was that he should thereby "be obliged to use his power humanely; and when the permanence of the position shall cease, the customary insolence will cease likewise."

This chief magistrate could be a man of any condition, soldier or townsman, from Metz or from any of the villages associated with Metz in the Messine republic. Nominally, the electors were dignitaries of the Church; "but this," says an old town chronicle, "was illusory, and the choice was always loudly dictated by the majority vote of the city."

The men who administered the affairs of this sturdy little republic showed how worthy of self-government and responsibility they were, by preparing themselves to rule. They studied; they became literate; they soon became so much better educated than their priests, that the Pope (to whom the bishop complained not of the people's knowledge but of the priests' ignorance) wrote the Messins a "paternal letter" in which he exhorted them not to despise the "simplicity of their pastors, but to honour them in their priestly character even if they could not admire their intelligence."

I don't know what the Messins did about it; but I daresay they tried to do as exhorted, although they probably smiled as they tried. They had a nice sense of humour, we know; one way they expressed it and their civic pride together was when a Messin became the father of a new son, on which occasion the proper

wish to express was that the boy might one day be "chief magistrate of Metz or *at least* king of France."

Not "emperor of Germany," please note! Although emperors were elected, and Metz had elected one from among her men of arms. There would have been no humour in wishing that a boy might become "at least emperor of Germany." In order that the whimsy of the thing might be perfect, there must be suggestion of what was always real royalty to Messins, real splendour—the crown of France. It is a little thing, but it tells a large tale.

Intensely proud of their republic though they were, the Messins were no less proud of being French. And throughout the seven centuries of their nominal allegiance to the old German Empire they became no more Germanized than during the half century of their enslavement by the Hohenzollern Empire.

Over one of their city gates (Porte Sainte-Barbe) they put (this tiny republic, defying all the world to do it harm) the motto:

"God give us peace within; we have peace without."

As a matter of fact they did not have enough "peace without" to brag about; but perhaps they had more and not less of it because they did brag. Nor was their peace within continuous; though it probably surpassed that of most cities essaying self-government.

Few studies are more interesting and enlightening than the study of laws made by people emerging from autocratic rule into self-expression on justice and penalties. Children at play surprise the unobserved observer with the severity of their code. The more they have suffered from severity, the more they take for granted that there is no other way. So, too, peoples newly emancipated from tyranny nearly always enact

tyrannical laws, which they soften only in course of time and experience.

The laws which the Messins framed for their republic were, we must remember, enacted in a day when everybody was rigorous and few were merciful. Yet scarcely any autocrat could have prescribed penalties severer than those the Messins meted out for those among themselves who erred.

Not only were murder and rape capital crimes, but the sentence had to be carried out by the relatives of the condemned, aided if necessary by the members of the city council. This seems unduly hard on the relatives and the councilmen; but there was probably a sense (even if a mistaken sense) of justice back of the provision. If the murderer or rapiner escaped, his house was razed. This was hard on his survivors; but we have not yet by any manner of means ceased to make wrongdoers' families share in the punishment for crime.

Banishment was pronounced for many offences, and fines for others. Corporal chastisement was freely administered. Ducking in dirty water was inflicted for some derelictions. And traitors were sewn in sacks and thrown into the Moselle. Suicides were similarly treated, only they were put in a barrel. A fraud in a business transaction was punished, if it was a first offence, by a brand on the forehead or the cutting off of an ear; repetition of the crime was punished by death.

Back of all this was an intensely earnest desire for perfection, or for the nearest approach thereto that mortals may attain. I wish we had space here to enumerate many details of the old laws. They are one of the best measuring posts I know, whereby we

may satisfy ourselves how much or how little we have grown in our concepts of democracy and civilization. But we must pass on.

It is, however, gratifying to record that Metz, singularly free from desire to augment her territory and proudly determined not to suffer any encroachment upon it, had, as the reward of her zeal for development, a high degree of prosperity and rather more contentment than was the common lot in those strife-full days.

When Pope Boniface VIII forbade all the clergy to pay any subsidies unless ordered by the Vatican, and King Philip IV of France protested, and the Pope preached war against France, the Messins again did their own thinking. They continued to collect taxes from lay and cleric alike, and they safeguarded the French in their republic.

Many years later, when there were two Popes, and the Emperor was sustaining the claims of one, the King of France those of the other, Metz declared for the authority at Avignon and against the Emperor. The latter took a bishop of his own choice to Metz to instate him—and took him away again. Instead, the Messins gave joyful welcome to a bishop (of the Coucy family) who was warmly commended to them by the King of France. That same Emperor, later in his reign, summoned to the imperial chamber certain magistrates of Metz who had refused to pay a claim unjustly made against them by a citizen of Frankfort. They declared, in effect, that this was none of the Emperor's business. He declared an imperial ban against Metz; whereupon Metz invaded the seignorial property of the Emperor and finally forced him to sign a revocation of the ban and to forego all compensation for damages done in his territory.

So timid were those Messins—and so Teutonic!

There is one story of those days, though, wherein an Emperor in his relations with the republic of Metz played a part more creditable to his kind; I think you'll like to hear it, in the interest of "fair play."

The Emperor was Charles IV. On the occasion of his sojourn at Metz when the famous Golden Bull was issued, there were still mutterings unsubdued from a recent uprising led by the butchers' guild. The principals in this insurrection had been adjudged guilty of treason and thrown, in sacks, into the Moselle; but some of their relatives cherished hopes of vengeance, and when the Emperor came they sought and obtained an audience with him, laying before him plans whereby he might (they thought) overthrow the Messin republic and make the rich city veritably subject to the empire—or to Bohemia, which was always dearer to his heart.

The Emperor listened; he was tempted; but he sought counsel, and he sought it of a good man. The Cardinal of Périgord was at Metz with the Dauphin of France (later Charles the Wise), who was the Emperor's nephew. The Emperor consulted the Cardinal, and was by him made terribly ashamed for having entertained a thought of such treachery; nor would there be absolution for him, the prelate warned, until he had revealed to the people of Metz the plot against their liberties.

(It was, we must remember, quite natural for this Emperor of Germany to consult and obey a French cardinal. For Charles IV had been sent to France, from Bohemia, when he was five years old, to be educated at the court of his uncle, Charles IV of France. He had the enthusiasm of his father, his mother, and

most of his kindred for France. He had fought for France at Crécy beside his father, King John of Bohemia, who there gave his life for France—and his crest and motto to the victorious Black Prince. Charles had himself been wounded at Crécy. He was of the House of Luxembourg, which long had coveted Metz and long had fought to take it.)

"The Emperor," says an old chronicle, "resigned himself, not without effort" to the counsel of the Cardinal. He notified the Council of Seven which dealt with such matters for Metz (where councils of seven were favoured for many things) and two of those councillors hid themselves under the draperies of the Emperor's bed, from which ambush they listened while their traitorous townsmen detailed to the sovereign how he might seize Metz. When the vengeance-seekers had told enough to condemn themselves and implicate the others involved with them, they were dismissed. Their arrest soon followed. Then the Emperor began to have some compunction for the way he had tricked them to their destruction, and he begged that no penalty be visited upon them while he was at Metz. This request was granted. But if he listened, from his gayly-decked barge taking him to Thionville, he must have heard the splash of heavy sacks hurled into the Moselle—so close upon his heels were the executioners and the accompanying mob.

But while we are chronicling this phase of events at Metz during that Christmas-tide of 1346, we must not omit to mention the very important history-making business which took the Emperor there at that time: the Golden Bull, which prescribed the electors who should choose Germany's emperors, and the procedure by which they should do it. There had been confusion about

eligibility to the imperial electorate, because Germany had never recognized the law of primogeniture. Charles IV defined the election of emperors in a way that, despite violent protests, from the Vatican down, persisted for nearly five hundred years. By this famous bull he excluded the Pope from imperial elections and did not provide even for papal sanction of what the seven electors did. To be sure, three of the electors were cardinal-archbishops—of Mayence, Trèves, and Cologne—and Rome might influence them as it could; but the temporal electors were the majority; they were the king of Bohemia, the margrave of Brandenburg, the count of the Rhine Palatinate, and the duke of Saxony. Elections were to be held at Frankfort, and coronations at Aix-la-Chapelle. The bull provided for yearly meetings of the electorate at Metz; but they were not held. Metz was chosen for the place of promulgation of this bull because of its "neutrality." Everybody recognized that while Metz was in the Empire, it was not of it.

The temptation to tell story after story of the sturdy Messins in those long-ago days is very great; but they would easily run into a book rather than a chapter. The way they held their own against dukes, kings, emperors, and popes is one of the most amusing and amazing stories of civic spirit that anybody ever read.

The wealth of Metz was for ever tempting someone; and not often was the tempted one able to put away—like Emperor Charles IV—the temptation. But Metz was almost incredibly resistant; wave after wave of cupidity dashed against the bulwarks of her stout independence and broke into froth which humiliated the assailants.

The Messins never interfered with anybody; but

what they invariably did when anybody interfered with them is a tale which keeps the reader of their annals chuckling. Also, it kept for their city, through all the centuries down to 1870, the sobriquet of La Pucelle—the Virgin.

I must take space here for an instance or two.

There was, for example, the time (1444) when Charles VII of France, having signed a truce with the English after the two countries had been at war for a hundred years, found himself with an army on his hands and nothing for it to do; so he took it to the aid of his brother-in-law, René of Anjou, Duke of Lorraine and Bar, to help René avenge the seizure of his wife's baggage by the Messins, at Pont-à-Mousson. (This seizure was made because the Duchess, acting as regent in her husband's absence, persistently refused to grant the Messins an interview at which they might lay before their suzerain their grievances and their claims against him.) Accordingly Charles and René proceeded to besiege Metz. For five months they were encamped about the city; and during three months of that time there was not a single day that the intrepid Messins did not make a sortie, to the discomfiture of their besiegers. Finally the affair was "called off." Charles and René could not get into Metz, and the Messins could not drive them away; so Charles accepted money to withdraw, and René accepted its equivalent —the cancellation of his debts to the Messins.

And there was, for another example, the time that Pope and Emperor called all the Empire to arms because the Archbishop of Mayence refused to turn over certain revenues that the Vatican demanded. To this call, the Messins wrote to the Pope reminding him that his business was to extinguish and not to light the fires of

discord; and to the Emperor they wrote that they were far too busy defending themselves against their covetous neighbours to go afield for troubles that didn't concern them. When the cathedral chapter, horrified by this answer to Rome, tried to influence the devout to uphold the Holy See, the government of the wee republic gave the canons seven days in which to get a change of heart or a change of residence; twenty-four of them left Metz. Five papal bulls of excommunication were launched against Metz, and I know not how many imperial threats; but Metz went serenely about her business, although she made a protest against the papal condemnation.

After three years of unyieldingness on all sides, intercessors brought about what they hoped would be a termination of these decidedly strained relations. The Pope issued a new bull in which he lifted the ban, on condition that the exiled canons be permitted to return; but he censured what he called the obstinacy of the Messins, and he made some demands of them which were contrary to their constitution. So the Messins hastened to send back his bull, and told him that unless he transferred his censure to the chapter, where it belonged, the canons could stay where they darn pleased—or words to that effect; and they reminded his holiness that the canons would never "boss" Metz—that they were fools if they didn't know this.

"Great was the rage of the sovereign Pontiff," we are told, "and in a new bull he consigned all the Messins to eternal damnation unless within a month they had acceded to his demands."

Were the Messins downhearted? Not a bit! And when peace was at last brought about, their concessions

were few and insignificant, the Vatican's many and humiliating.

A few years later the Duke of Lorraine thought the time favourable for another of the attacks which his house was for ever making upon the nervy little republic which had carved itself out of the very midst of his great duchy. So, on the night of April 9, 1473, he arrived with an army of eight thousand foot soldiers and eighteen hundred horse, at a village not far from Metz; and at daybreak he dispatched towards the coveted city two carts and a small convoy of his most daring soldiers. The first cart was loaded with barrels filled with arms, the second carried only wood. The soldiers were disguised as fish-mongers. The plan was that they should somehow manage to get the portcullis of the Porte Serpenoise raised to let in a cart-load of fish; that the second cart should crowd in after the first and so stand that when the "fish" were being examined for the *octroi* or city tax, the load of wood was directly under the sharp-toothed portcullis. The discovery of arms instead of fish in the barrels of the first cart would cause an order to be given for the quick lowering of the portcullis; the load of wood, catching the teeth of the descending gate, would keep it from going all the way down; and the soldiers behind would crowd through the porte on either side of the stuck wagon.

All worked out as planned. The gate-keeper was struck down; the men-at-arms on guard there were shot; and soon hundreds of Lorrainers were pouring into the rue Serpenoise crying: "The city is taken! Kill! Kill!"

But the city wasn't taken! A baker named Forel was busy with his bread; he heard the hubbub, rushed

into the street, saw what was happening, wormed himself through the attacking soldiery, reached the gate through which they were coming, climbed to the top, and struggled with the counterweights of the portcullis until he forced it up and then made it drop with all its heft. It cut the cart of wood in two, and closed the city against more invaders! Then Forel sounded the alarm. The townsfolk tumbled out of their beds, poured into the street in their night-clothes, and, armed with hatchets, cleavers, whatever came first to hand, they fell upon the invaders, killing many and taking many prisoners.

When the Duke of Lorraine, after he had beat an ignominious retreat, demanded the return of those taken prisoners, the Messins told him to come and get them. But they must have known he wouldn't come; for they lost no time in holding a large hanging: ninety bold men, including a number of gentlemanly soldiers of fortune, were soon swinging in the April breezes blowing off the Moselle.

A man to remember at Metz, is Forel the baker! By this time the citizens have doubtless cast off all the German designations wherewith the Prussians replaced the old, richly reminiscent French names; and you will be able to identify the remains of the Porte Serpenoise, instead of missing it under the mask of "Prince Friedrich Karl Thor."

After this attack upon their liberties, it would not have been surprising if the Messins had taken sides against the Duke of Lorraine in those struggles wherein Lorraine was presently engaged with Burgundy, France, and the Empire. But so wedded to her ideal of neutrality was the tiny republic that she kept aloof from all those quarrels. Her sympathy, however, was for

France. And the Emperor (Frederick) knew it, and reproached the Messins in a violent letter.

"I have secured," he wrote them, "a decree of my imperial chamber, by which all franchises and privileges received by you from our ancestors, from us, or from the Holy Empire, are abolished and forfeited."

However, he soon thought better of this, and "unsaid" it in some one of the many ways whereby royal personages were permitted to eat their words without having to sacrifice their face.

Meanwhile Louis XI of France was courting Metz. In 1480 he secured permission for his army to cross the little republic, and to the deputies who took him this permission he said: "Gentlemen of Metz, I have received more from you than you have from me. You have come to see me without asking for anything. I wish to be your friend and your good neighbour, and I am resolved never to make war against you, on my word; and if any one shows a will to harm you, come to me and I will take up your cause as that of my friends."

When Louis died, many services for the repose of his soul were held in all the parishes of Metz, the republic.

But in 1490, when his son, Charles VIII, was busy in Brittany using force of arms to persuade Duchess Anne to repudiate the Emperor Maximilian and give her hand and her duchy to the King of France, the cathedral chapter at Metz took occasion of the Bishop's removal (by death or otherwise) to avenge its old grudge of nearly thirty years back, by electing to the vacancy an uncle of René II, Duke of Lorraine. And the first act of the new bishop was to attack the privileges enjoyed by citizens of Metz for centuries. They

defended their rights, of course; and the Duke of Lorraine upheld his uncle.

This brought a Lorraine army again beneath the walls of Metz where René could actually hear the joyful noises of celebrations which the Messins held continually in gratification over his impotence to disturb their tranquillity. It was René who finally implored peace; but he could not conquer his desire to humble the proud Messins; and there were more troubles—quite dreadful troubles!—before the Emperor Maximilian succeeded in establishing peace between the Messins and their suzerain.

In May, 1494, when René's Duchess was at Sainte-Barbe on a pilgrimage, the Messins persuaded her to pass three days at Metz, where they entertained her sumptuously and loaded her with "presents and honours." This was just fifty years, to the exact month, from the time their fathers had seized the baggage of René I's duchess to satisfy their claims.

Soon after Maximilian effected this peace the Messins entered into a league with him; but they stipulated that they must not be asked to take up arms against the King of France.

Metz was not only very opulent in those closing days of the fifteenth century, but very splendid withal. There was not a day, we are told, without its tournament or mystery play, its masquerade, banquet, or dance. Strangers delighted to visit the city; "sure of being welcomed with hearty goodwill, they poured into the joyous city."

It was this reputation which attracted to it, in 1514, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who had just conducted his lady-love, Mary Tudor, sister of King Henry VIII, to the withered arms of Louis XII. Probably

Suffolk surmised how short a time his sprightly Mary would require to worry her ancient and undesired spouse into his welcome grave; so he withdrew no farther from her than Metz, where he passed several months of quite endurable waiting while Mary made short work of her liege's last days. Her wedding with Suffolk, almost immediately after the King's death, was secret; and as soon as it was celebrated, the bridegroom returned to Metz and many pleasures, whilst the widow-bride took up her decorous (perforce) residence in the Cluny abbey at Paris.

When war broke out between Francis I and Charles V, the Messins asked both parties to respect their neutrality, and both agreed to do so. But Charles was by no means satisfied with the quality of it, and bitterly reproached the republic for its leaning (in sentiment) towards France.

In January, 1541, the Emperor, accompanied by all his court came to Metz, where he was magnificently received and loaded with costly gifts. But there was more policy than loyalty in all this. And the Messins were very guarded in the promises they made to Charles on this occasion. Protestantism was strong at Metz, and Charles was known to be its foe. Riches were abundant at Metz, and Charles was known to be very greedy.

Their distrust of him was justified. He was extortionate in his demands for money, and bigoted in his "holy crusade against heresy."

The magistrates of Metz protested to the Emperor, and dared to say to him that the Messins would not continue to endure his sovereignty unless he showed more respect of their immemorial immunities. But Charles was blind to the probabilities, and yielded not a whit.

Accordingly the Messins cast in their lot with those German Protestant princes who were leagued against the Emperor and had implored the King of France (Henry II) to deliver them from their odious subjection. On April 10, 1552, Metz received with open arms the French army; and on Easter Sunday (the 18th) Henry joined his soldiers there and was acclaimed with the same honours previously rendered to the emperors. But in August, Charles came to terms with his rebellious princes—which left Henry unsupported in his war, but in possession of Metz, Toul, and Verdun.

Charles ordered Henry out of these places and commanded their inhabitants to return to the "protection" of the Empire. Nobody obeyed. Instead, Henry hastened to strengthen the defences of the three cities and prepared to hold them against siege. Charles was determined to get back Metz at any cost, even if he had to relinquish the others. And Henry was as determined to keep it. He had, moreover, the enthusiastic assistance of the Messins, who worked night and day for nearly three months, under the direction of Francis, Duke of Guise, to whom Henry had entrusted the defence, to make their virgin city inviolable.

Charles brought to the attack a formidable army, while the fighting force of Guise within the city numbered, besides the garrison, 4500 foot, 444 horses, and about 900 gentlemen volunteers who were French soldiers of fortune. But the ardor and energy of the Messins in supplementing Guise's forces were illimitable; men and women of all classes toiled at the defences and, without waiting even for the word of command, razed their own dwellings if they were in the line of fire. Henry was at Saint-Mihiel, and Guise wrote to him that the King might lead his army wherever it was

needed; as for Metz, it had no need of assistance, and, with no other aid than that lent by the citizens, could sustain a siege of ten months, if necessary.

Under the fire of the imperial guns, breaches in the walls were mended almost as fast as they were made. Once, when a great opening was torn, the Imperials shouted with joy to see the cloud of dust that rose where their shot had struck, and they rushed towards the place to force it and enter the city. It was then that one of the defenders, a French veteran named Montilly, walked down over the heaps of debris into the moat and strolled casually back again as if unaware that any one of unfriendly sort was outside the walls.

Charles saw this cool impudence, was made furious thereby, and ordered ladders brought up and the walls scaled. But his soldiers obeyed "with extreme hesitation." Montilly had given them the impression that he desired; he had filled them with fear of the imperturbable folk within the walls; and the imperturbable folk met the scaling force in a way which spread the idea that it was useless to attack Metz.

After forty-five days of bombardment during which fourteen thousand cannon-balls fell on Metz, Charles withdrew his army—or, rather, what was left of it; for thirty thousand unburied dead lay in the plains around the city, and the Messins picked up and nursed back to health more than three hundred wounded soldiers of the Emperor, abandoned when he withdrew in haste.

The loss of Metz was an enormous chagrin to Charles V and cost him heavily in depleted prestige.

It would be pleasant to record that after this valiant resistance, Metz lived happily for ever and ever so long—until the Germans came again, more than two

centuries later. It would be pleasant, but it wouldn't be true.

For, after the besieging army took itself off at the beginning of 1553, Metz reacted from the terrific strain. She had some thousands of unemployed soldiers within her walls; and after Guise left, their discipline relaxed and they behaved badly. The man whom Henry had made military governor of Metz, under Guise, was a bad sort, unable (or unwilling) to restrain himself or the idle soldiery of France. Very bad conditions prevailed; and the Bishop of Metz thought the occasion favourable for setting up an ecclesiastical autocracy in which he should wield great power and win great favour at the Vatican. When he found he could not maintain this alone, he appealed to the Emperor, and endeavoured to deliver Metz again into his hands. But Henry was able to deal vigorously with these disorders. He called himself only the protector of Metz—as did two of his sons after him. It was Henry III who declared himself sovereign seigneur of Metz, in 1585.

The Messins loved France, but they loved their independence above all things, and they made many complaints of the gradual curtailment of their liberties in self-government. But these dissatisfactions never became disloyalties; they supported their kings wholeheartedly, and on many occasions aligned themselves with the Crown of France against the dukes of Lorraine and Guise. This was notably true in the wars of the Catholic League—which means that Metz set the nation above the Church. When Henry IV was king, the loyalty of the Messins to him may have been in some degree personal, for he was the sort of man to win and hold their hearts. But they had been true to Charles

IX and Henry III—or, rather, to what those wretched monarchs represented; and this could be only because the ideal for which the tiny Messin republic had stood so valiantly through five centuries was akin to the national ideal which made France resist the domination of the Vatican.

The kings of France went often to Metz and always were received there with a devoted acclaim which had little or no relation to anything they had done for Metz but every relation to what France meant to the Messins. Louis XIV was there frequently—once, at least, with all his court, for a period of six weeks. And it was during a sojourn at Metz, in 1744, that Louis XV fell desperately ill and lay near death, to the great (though inexplicable) distress of the Messins, who stoned the king's mistress, Madame de Châteauroux, because they thought she was in some way the cause of his condition. Louis himself was pretty well scared, and made a number of good resolves—which he did not keep. He sent Châteauroux packing back to Paris; but he had scarcely returned there himself when he fell into the toils of Pompadour.

Twenty years later the cathedral chapter of Metz ordered the construction of a west portal to the Cathedral, as a memorial of gratitude for the Sovereign's recovery. This portal must have been worthier of Louis than of the exquisite cathedral; for it was described by an ardent Messin as disfiguring the edifice in the way that a goitre disfigures the neck of a lovely woman. But it wasn't ugly enough to suit the Prussians; so, almost immediately after their occupation began, in 1870, they demolished it and substituted an orgy of their own which was dedicated with great pomp in 1903; a characteristic thing it is, with Wilhelm II

—smirk, upturned moustaches, leering eyes, and all—posed as the prophet Daniel. Hideous as it is, and insulting to the cathedral, I hope the French will leave it, to tell its story through the ages; to remind beholders, always, of the atrocities Germans commit when they build as when they destroy. The cathedral was more than five centuries in building. Its chief glory (though it has many) is its windows—more than thirteen thousand square feet of glass, like jewels of the Apocalypse, make it like an immense Sainte-Chapelle. The Messins call it "the holy lantern"; and it is hard to say whether the effect is more magnificent when seen from within on a sunny day or from without on a night when the cathedral is brightly lighted.

The Revolution brought little violence to Metz. It would have brought less to France and have accomplished its work much more quickly if there had been many towns schooled as Metz was in the uses of liberty and self-government. The Messins fought valiantly in the armies of the Revolution and in those of the Consulate and the Empire. When the Coalition was fighting the Empire, Metz held her ports firmly closed against the enemies of France.

And then, after all these proud centuries, came the heart-rending humiliation of 1870 and afterwards.

The temptation to write at length on the siege and capitulation of Metz, on its seizure by Germany, and its years of suffering under German rule, must be resisted here; because, of all Metz's story, that part is most accessible to readers of English.

Conjecture plays a leading part in all narratives of the surrender, and probably history will never become definite on many points connected therewith. Divest-

ing it of details interesting mainly to strategists, the story in outline is this:

The mistakes of the last days of July (while Germany was completing mobilization) and the first days of August showed clearly that Napoleon III was physically, mentally, and temperamentally unfit to command the armies of France in this struggle. So, on August 12th, he placed Marshal Bazaine in supreme command.

Bazaine was a native of Versailles, had entered the French army as a private, was advanced rapidly, had done good service in Africa and in the Crimea, and was sent to Mexico in command of the French army supporting Maximilian. There he married a Mexican and succumbed (apparently) to the *mañana* affliction of the country. What energy he showed was directed more toward securing personal power of a High Cockalorum sort which would give him not military supremacy but political perquisites to dispense.

There is some evidence of his having followed the same plan when he returned to France; of his having exerted himself more in palace politics than in military matters.

However, he was at least not set above vastly superior men; for France was then very poor in generalship, owing to the recent popularity of pacifism and commercialism.

The mildest thing that can be said of Bazaine as a commander is that he suffered seriously from indecision. At Gravelotte, August 18th, Bazaine was never in the field and, at headquarters, seemed suffering from a "mental paralysis which rendered him almost oblivious to his surroundings."

The outcome of this battle threw him back upon Metz and facilitated the German march upon Paris.

MacMahon's army was at Châlons and might have done much to save the capital; but the Empress, acting through the new war minister, sent MacMahon peremptory instructions to hurry his army to Bazaine's aid. It was the attempt to obey these orders that ended in the tragedy at Sedan.

If, after Gravelotte, Bazaine had waited only to rest and feed and re-munition his army at Metz, the whole story of the war from that point on might easily have been a totally different one. But he settled down in Metz, apparently with no thought of doing anything but wait. Perhaps he knew the Empress would intervene and order him "relieved" at any cost. Perhaps—! But why multiply conjectures?

Metz was too formidable for the Germans to take by assault or even by siege; but, with its own considerable population and 150,000 soldiers of the army of the Rhine, it could be "reduced" by investment or blockade, cutting off supplies. This the Germans settled down to do, on August 19th, when they were able to realize that Bazaine was going to make no move.

On August 26th Bazaine almost made a sortie—but decided not to. On August 31st he actually made one, lost 3500 men, and gained nothing. Then came Sedan, and the Emperor's captivity along with that of the whole army sent to Bazaine's relief.

The doleful month of September wore on and depression in the city deepened with every inactive day. All sorts of plans were discussed by the citizens, many efforts were made to goad Bazaine into action. ("There was," he declared in his own defence when tried for treason, at Versailles, in 1873, after the Germans had released him, "nothing left to fight for; the Emperor and his army were prisoners; the Empire had fallen."

"There was," proudly and sternly replied the Duc d'Aumale, Louis-Philippe's son, a Royalist representing the justice of his republican government, "there was France!" Always, always to the Frenchman who is truly French, there is France. Governments may change, all his ideas of what the State should be may be violated by what the State *is;* but ever "there is France," and for her honour he will die and die proudly.)

In October Bazaine made two feeble sorties, but was easily beaten back. Starvation and steady rains and sick hearts brought the morale of the city low; and smallpox and dysentery found easy prey as they became epidemic.

On October 14th Bazaine surrendered Metz and the Army of the Rhine and released the Crown Prince's investing amy of more than two hundred thousand to march against Paris and Orleans. Forty-eight hours more resistance, it is said, might have turned the tide of war in France's favour.

Then, for the first time in her history, Metz opened her gates to an enemy, and a long captivity began for her proud citizens.

But among the many sad hearts there after that war was over, among the many resolved that this shame should not endure, was one whose suffering and glory will always transcend every other memory of Metz: a young Gascon student who had left Saint-Clément's College to join the colours of France and had returned to resume his studies under the hated flag of imperial Germany; to him it was given to direct the Allied armies of civilization in resisting and breaking imperial Germany; to his French troops fell the glory of freeing Metz. No greater name is in the annals of Metz than that of Ferdinand Foch.

XXII

STRASBOURG

STRASBOURG has, in a degree not paralleled by any other city we have dealt with in these chapters, two histories. She has a superficial history in which she seems to be essentially a German city, of German-speaking, German-thinking, German-feeling people, torn from the arms of Germany by the audacity of Louis XIV and held by France until Germany regained her own in 1871. And she has a sub-surface history in which she discloses herself as French not by treaty, but in spirit; not by conquest of arms, but by impermeation of ideas and ideals; not by forced conformity, but by expansion in the direction her own interests dictated.

The first of these histories is easily come-by; nearly all brief accounts of the city, and many longer ones, give an impression of German flavour. Visitors to Strasbourg before the late war (and after '70) were more than likely to conclude that Strasbourg was essentially German—just as they had to concede, at Metz, that Metz never had been and never could be anything but French.

To reach the sub-surface history of Strasbourg, one must delve; one must know not alone the political facts about her, but many things—significant, control-

ling things—about her physical geography, her ethnography, her position in commerce, her relation to the movements of peoples up and down the great thoroughfares of west-central Europe, her reactions to world-moving ideas.

A survey of all these is manifestly impossible in any brief account. But it may be possible to convey in a chapter what besides treaties makes Strasbourg a city of France; and that is what you will most want to know when you go there—what you will most *need* to know, so that you may not be confused by some things you will see and hear there.

It seems that once upon a time (in geological, not human "time") the Vosges Mountains and the mountains of the Black Forest, now some seventy miles apart, were one and the same range, which a titanic upheaval split in two and spread on either side of the narrow valley, part of which has long been called Upper Alsace. Through this rift (too wide to be called a chasm) flow the Rhine and its multitude of tributaries. A turbulent current, the Rhine, all through the valley, a length of a hundred and twenty-five miles, in the course of which the swirling, oft-augmented stream flows downhill on a descent of more than four hundred and fifty feet to the hundred miles. From February to June, each year, when the mountain snows are melting and the mountain torrents are swollen till they laugh noisily at their inadequate wee beds, the Rhine (which rises near the St. Gothard Pass in southern Switzerland, and leads a very errant life before it enters upon its boundary duties between Germany and Switzerland) is a boisterous, badly-behaved river,—especially between Bâle and Lauterbourg, which are respectively at the south and north extremities of Al-

sace. Many sorts of things come down those swirling waters—trees and other uprooted vegetation; whole sections of river-bank torn from yon places and wilfully left where least wanted; and, owing to this waywardness, century after century went by without a single village settling on the whole west bank of the Rhine between Bâle and Lauterbourg. And in all that length (one hundred and twenty-five miles) there were, until the seventeenth century, only two bridges, both of pontoon type, one near Strasbourg and one near Bâle.

There was very little crossing of the Rhine at any point in what we now call Alsace. The capricious river constituted a barrier to relations between the peoples on either side of it, "surer than the best walls." Equally entrenched were the Alsatians on their western front, where, for long ages, the Vosges were regarded as "uncrossable" and impenetrable, except at Belfort (at the south) and at Saverne (northwest of Strasbourg). At each of these places there was a natural "cut" in the mountains, through which men passed if they passed at all.

River to east and mountains to west and dense forests at northern and southern extremities. Thus was Alsace shut in by nature. And unless you keep this in mind you cannot understand her history.

Nor was nature content with shutting Alsace in. She went farther: she cut the enclosed space into many little parcels, each more or less separated, by natural barriers, from the others. There was distinctness in each parcel, yet harmony and a spirit of unity among them all. Together they produced nearly everything requisite for their common needs, and depended little on the world outside.

The people who settled here were Celts. When Greece was in her Golden Age, the section of Europe we now call Alsace was almost the centre of the vast area inhabited by the Celts.

The Celts were a people who liked "staying *put*"; they were tillers of the soil, not nomads; they were democratic; they had small use for kings.

Across the turbulent Rhine were the Germanic peoples whose essential differences from the Celts Cæsar described for us; they were nomads, living by the chase and by war; "they spent their time destroying their neighbours; their greatest glory is to be surrounded by vast solitudes and by countries ravaged by their arms." They were not democratic; even then they set the glory of the chief and of the clan (the state) above the development of the individual in ability to rule.

When Cæsar came, conquering Gaul and fixing its eastern boundary at the estranging Rhine, he interfered practically not at all with the Celtic tribes he found in Alsace; nor did many Romans from the Tiber's banks come to mingle with these new citizens of the Empire. The Celts between the Vosges and the Rhine were so little disturbed by Roman rule that for long centuries after it ceased to be in their part of the world they went on, as they had gone before Rome came, developing their old Celtic institutions, cherishing their old Celtic republicanism—but with a difference! Rome had not deflected them, but she had impermeated them with new ideas, ideas essentially Latin.

The Celts of Alsace remained agricultural, peaceable, democratic; but they took kindly to the Roman scheme of good roads, facile communication, abundant water-supply brought in aqueducts), and other public works.

In course of time the Celtic tongue disappeared and Latin took its place; Celtic law gave way to Roman law; the Druidic religion, to the worship of Rome's deities. Underneath all this, though (and it was all adopted, not imposed), persisted a remarkably sturdy development which was unswervingly democratic and never imperialistic; which took from Rome that which helped, and left to Rome's other citizens that which enervated and made for decline.

Alsace knew little of the earliest barbarian invasions. There were two great routes, in those days and for long afterwards, between middle Europe and Gaul. One of them led from the valley of the Danube through Switzerland and into Gaul at Belfort; the other was the northern route into Belgium and thence to Picardy and Champagne. All the early invaders came by one or the other of these routes, crossing the Rhine either at Bâle or at Mayence or at Cologne—to the south or far to the north of Alsace.

But in the middle of the fourth century a swarm of the devastaters seems to have achieved the crossing of the Rhine near Strasbourg and to have pillaged that city (which had recently grown from a Roman garrison to a "municipality") and Saverne. Thirty-five thousand of them were said to be in this expedition, led by seven kings. But Julian (not yet become emperor and apostate, but still commander of Rome's legions along the Rhine) defeated them with thirteen thousand men, in a great battle near Strasbourg, taking many prisoners, including the chief of the seven kings. Those whom he did not kill, nor take alive, he drove back across the Rhine.

There has never been any way, though, to discourage Germans from invading France. No matter how many

were killed in one attempt, there were always multitudes available for the next.

Twenty years after Julian drove them off, there was another crop of the same Alamans ready to try again, and in June, 378, forty thousand of them managed to cross the Rhine near Colmar. Thirty thousand perished in this attempt, which was soon defeated.

A generation later the Vandals came, with a train of other barbarians caught up by them on their westward way. Strasbourg seems to have capitulated to them—those were the days of Honorius, the weak and incapable Emperor of the Western Empire, from which the Eastern Empire had just separated—and from there the invaders evidently turned north towards Champagne and Picardy; blazing, as 'twere, the trail that Attila and his Tartars followed forty-five years later.

The city that we now call Strasbourg was probably the first Gallic town to suffer at Attila's hands; and it may also have been the last, because he seems to have retreated, from Châlons, that way, and to have been not less destructive in rout than in onslaught. Of Strasbourg he left so little that even the name disappeared.

Then one day another battle was fought near the dust and débris that had been a city of the Roman Empire and a garrison for Roman legions—a battle remarkable in its contending forces as in its enduring results: Tolbiac, wherein one Germanic chieftain (Clovis), fighting nominally as a defender of Roman rule in eastern Gaul, defeated the Germanic chieftain of the Alamans and made it clear that further incursions from east of the Rhine would be summarily dealt with. Rome was, indeed, decadent and dying;

but her estates in Gaul were already pre-empted, and "no others need apply."

There is a tradition at Strasbourg that in gratitude for the victory of Tolbiac, Clovis laid the foundations of Strasbourg Cathedral before he went on his way to Reims to fulfil his vow and offer himself for Christian baptism. He and his successors rebuilt the city and reinstituted its old Celto-Roman system of self-government.

Germans will tell you (if you let them) that by this time Alsace had become peopled with Alamans and other folk from across the Rhine. It hadn't! It remained Celtic, and clung tenaciously to its Celtic fundamentals. The ancient authors agree as to this, with unusual unanimity. The modern authors who aver otherwise are of the sort Frederick the Great described when he said: "I begin by taking possession of a province; pedants can always be found afterwards to prove that it was my perfect right."

Square miles of white paper have been covered by German pedants in efforts to prove that Alsace belongs to Germany because her people speak German (an argument never effective with them when the case is reversed, as in Poland); but the plain truth of the matter is that in no other part of Gaul did the Germanic invasions effect so few changes in the racial strain of the earlier inhabitants, or in their manner of living. The Alsatians continued to be as Cæsar had found them: a peaceable, non-roving, agricultural, democratic people, maintaining the best that Rome had taught them, superimposed on the essentially Celtic foundations of their far forbears.

In June, 841, the three sons of Louis the Debonair, quarrelling about the vast empire of their grandfather,

Charlemagne, met in a bloody battle in which Louis the German and Charles the Bald defeated their elder brother, Lothair, who claimed the entire patrimony. But they felt none too secure by reason of this victory, probably because each of them profoundly distrusted the other as well as Lothair; so they and their followers met at Strasbourg, on the fourteenth of February, 842, and there took oath of loyalty each to the other, and swore that neither would make a separate peace with Lothair. The text of this oath has come down to us. It was taken in two languages, German and that Romance tongue which was evolving French out of Latin. This historic text is the earliest specimen preserved to posterity of that speech which was to become the French language.

"For the love of God," said Louis the German, "and for the Christian people's and our own common safety, from this day forward, so far as God gives me knowledge and power, I will support my brother Charles with my assistance in all things, as one ought properly to support one's brother, on condition that he does the same by me; and I will never make an arrangement with Lothair, of my own free will, to the detriment of my said brother Charles."

Lothair seems to have been impressed by this oath as he was not by his defeat in battle; and, largely as a consequence of it, he consented to the Treaty of Verdun in August of the following year. By that treaty Louis became master of the eastern provinces, with the Rhine as his western boundary; Charles got the western provinces of France; and Lothair retained the richest part of the empire: Rome, and the central strip, from Lombardy north to and through Belgium and including Alsace.

After this treaty each of the brothers was so occupied with holding his own against threatening hordes (Saracens on Lothair's south, Normans on Charles's north, Slavs on Louis's east borders) that they not only lived in comparative peace among themselves, but actually held a reunion at Mersen on the Meuse, in 847, to swear that at their deaths their sons should inherit the existing kingdoms, without reopening the discussion of partition. This was assuming a good deal, it seems to me, when we consider how little these three sons were constrained by their father's wishes. But nothing came of this amiable "swearing."

Lothair divided his realm between his three sons, leaving that part of it between the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt (including Alsace) to the third, his namesake. The eldest son coveted this and complained to his uncles that part at least of these possessions should have gone to him along with Italy and the imperial title. Uncle Charles said this plaint was without just cause. But Uncle Louis, pretending to sympathize with it, came into Lothair's kingdom and helped himself to Alsace—not to add it to his imperial nephew's territory, but to add it to his own.

That is how Alsace became German. Louis the German, having lodged himself there and given himself the title of King of Alsace, said that twenty-three years before, when he had aided his brothers in making their father prisoner, the latter had bribed Louis to effect his release by promising him Alsace. In the meantime (supposing that such promise ever was made) Louis the German had entered into several superseding covenants with his brothers. But not a whit did Louis care for these. Possession was ten points of the law, in his code, when he was the possessor. He

wasn't even bothered, like Frederick the Great, to find pedants to prove his "perfect right." He was his own pedant—and he held on. Charles the Bald was too occupied against the Normans immediately to contest Louis's theft of Alsace; Louis the Emperor was too hard-pressed in Italy; Lothair was only half-hearted about anything except getting a divorce from his detested queen so he could marry the woman he loved.

During the next hundred and thirty-three years France lent her aid to Alsace, when she could, in six different efforts to shake off the German yoke. It was not until Hugh Capet assumed the crown of France, and with it the exceedingly difficult and absorbing job of trying to hold it, that Alsace was abandoned to the descendants of Louis the German. But even at that time resistance to German dominion had so little decreased that Germany took no chances such as might have been attendant upon creating Alsace an entity of the German Empire; instead, Alsace was annexed to Suabia, whose duke then took the title of Duke of Suabia and Alsace. In the twelfth century this double dukedom was held by members of the House of Hohenstaufen, which gave Barbarossa and other emperors to Germany; so the dukes of Alsace were also emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. Then, early in the thirteenth century we find a Swiss, Rudolph of Habsburg, coming into prominence and making such good use of his opportunities that thenceforth his descendants were, for more than four hundred years, landgraves (or dukes) of Alsace as well as emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. Indeed, when Alsace became reunited to France in 1648, it was by giving Louis XIV the title hitherto held by the Habsburgs: landgrave of Alsace.

As the landgraves of Alsace became emperors in 1273,

they delegated their special, provincial ruling to a lieutenant called a landvogt, who resided at Hagenau, twenty miles north of Strasbourg. But the authority of this functionary was never great. The suzerainty of the Habsburgs was nominal, both as landgraves and as emperors. Alsace respected a few of her feudal relations with them and disregarded others. Always she was full of independent ways and ideas, and allegiance to anything other than her own working-out of her own destiny gave her precious little concern.

Feudalism had full sway within her borders; and it was well that this was so. For there was anarchy in the empire, even beyond what we have described as the condition of the kingdom of France, and it was the iron rule of the seigneurs, lay and ecclesiastic, which held Alsace together and permitted the succeeding democracy to develop resistant strength.

Strasbourg was a bishopric. It was a city of thoroughfare, through which passed much of the traffic between France and Germany. It had great strategic importance.

In 987, when Hugh Capet was so occupied with making himself stronger than his great vassals in France that he had to abandon the effort to rescue Alsace, the Emperor of Germany, Otto II, was no less busy trying to make himself stronger with his great vassals. And in the hope of developing a power which should be opposed to them and friendly to him, he gave the bishops of Strasbourg extraordinary rights and powers. He made them sole judges in their city, to the exclusion of duke, count, or what-not who had feudal rights therein.

He constituted the bishops counts, and thereby temporal as well as spiritual rulers of the city. He al-

lotted to them the toll-taxes collected at Strasbourg, which were heavy. The bishops of Strasbourg became very rich. Their possessions gradually extended to include seven towns, seven castles, and fifty villages. They were dowered with treasure by scores of great folk who hoped thereby to win leniency of Heaven. When they got so rich and powerful, their office was coveted, and won, by members of the great ruling houses of Germany.

Some of the early bishops were very, very good—real shepherds whose croziers prodded easily-errant feet into safe heavenly pastures. And some of the later bishops were so greedy and so arrogant and so quarrelsome and so cruel that they were more than "horrid" and we find them referred to in history as "the terrible bishops of Strasbourg."

One of the early (and good) bishops was Erkanbold, who, at the end of the tenth century, made, apparently with the aid and consent of his flock, a code of laws by which Strasbourg was governed for a hundred years. The preamble of this code declared that "Strasbourg was founded so that all men, native or foreign, might have peace there at all times and with all the world." There was much benevolence in that code (as benevolence was comprehended in those days) but it left power for good or evil almost unrestricted in the bishops' hands. Every one who administered affairs was appointed by the bishop; there was nothing approaching democracy. The townsfolk had no voice in naming their councillors until the latter years of the eleventh century, when a new code was granted them by one of the Hohenstaufen who was then their bishop.

Soon after they won this concession from their clerical seigneur the burghers of Strasbourg demanded another,

of the emperor: immunity from being cited to appear before any tribunals except those of their own city, presided over by judges of their own election. This made them independent of outside jurisdiction, even that of the landgrave of Alsace, except in cases involving property they owned beyond the confines of Strasbourg.

One demand followed another; and in 1263 Strasbourg became a republic, a little state of itself, walled, armed, defended—in an earnest effort to mind its own business and oblige other folks to mind theirs. This example was soon followed by practically all the towns of Alsace, aided by the emperor who saw in this plan a way of reducing the power of his nobles and increasing the number and strength of the places directly answerable to him.

At first he was represented in each city by an imperial agent sent there by him to guard his interests. Gradually the status of these agents changed; sometimes an emperor, pressed for cash, sold a city the right to elect its own "*schultheiss*"; in one way and another the tiny republics managed to exclude from their affairs every one who was not a citizen of the town wherein he held his elective office.

When the towns began to have so much security, so much wealth, and so much power, the nobles flocked in to dwell there, and used their accustomedness in command to thrust themselves into the positions of most reward. So quickly and demandingly did they manifest this tendency, that within a generation after the founding of the little republics, or free cities, many towns were almost entirely in the hands of the patriciate.

At first the nobles worked with good zeal for the welfare of the city with which they had cast their lot. Then they became haughty, unfair, and otherwise

insupportable, and by 1292—fewer than fourscore years after it was enfranchised—we find Colmar, a neighbour of Strasbourg, chasing her nobles beyond her walls.

The strife between the burghers and the nobles was particularly strong at Strasbourg where the greedy quarrels between members of two powerful noble families contending for the "spoils" of office gave rise to grave disorders. After bitter struggles in 1332, the troublesome nobles were deprived of weapons, shorn of power, and the fomenters of discord were exiled from the city. Thenceforth not more than one third of all public offices could be held by nobles. In 1397 Strasbourg made every voter classify himself, and those who claimed nobility were ordered out of the city and forbidden to return within ten years. To be a burgher of Strasbourg was the highest title to which any citizen was allowed to make claim.

The preponderance of nobles in the affairs of Strasbourg had ceased in 1332, but there were still many who refused to avow themselves mere citizens; so a great number left. Two subsequent exoduses of these folk left Strasbourg pretty well denuded of persons who insisted on privileges of birth, and pretty much in the hands of persons striving to make themselves prominent.

Always, though, there were the "terrible bishops" most of whom scorned the crozier and loved the naked sword. No prelates, they, for the most part, but ferocious warriors who used their holy office for all unholy purposes. Over the citizens of Strasbourg their temporal jurisdiction was slight; but their numerous dependencies outside were so much at their mercy that they were continually striving to extend their

sway in Strasbourg; and thereupon hinged almost unending contention, sometimes amounting to actual warfare.

All this time the relation of Alsace to the Emperor was growing more and more nominal. Strasbourg admitted no representative of the Emperor to a voice in any of her affairs. She would not take an oath of loyalty to the emperor. She called herself not "a republic," but "the republic," and entered into treaties as a sovereign state with other sovereign states.

When the Emperor Frederick III came to Strasbourg in 1473, he was received with many honours, presented with the gifts prescribed by usage, but reminded by the citizens that these things were done voluntarily and not because they recognized him as their liege; they asked him to recall that their ancestors had never taken any oath of fidelity to his predecessors; and they assured him that they meant to maintain their old traditions of independence.

The social organization by means of which this spirit was preserved and fostered was a most interesting one. The population was divided into twenty "tribes" which were named for as many trades: butchers, bakers, wine-merchants, coopers, etc., with the tribe of boatmen at the head. Each tribe comprised not only all the workmen of the particular calling whose name it bore, but as many other citizens as found that group most to their liking. Everybody belonged to a tribe; if he didn't belong by virtue of his occupation, he chose one of the twenty and identified himself with it. All voting was done through the tribes. Each tribe had its own constitution, its own traditions and regulations, its own tribunal for dealing with offences against the tribal laws, and—of course—its officers.

Each had a meeting-place called a *poële*, which is the word for stove; and during many months of the year the tribal deliberations were held in a ground-floor assembly-room wherein the members grouped themselves around one of the huge tile stoves which have been common in that part of Europe for centuries. The *poële* often belonged to the tribe whose meeting-place it was, and was kept for them by a steward. When the tribe did not own a house, its meetings were held at an inn. These *poëles* were places of pleasure as well as of politics. The members gathered there, evenings, Sundays, and holidays, not only to discuss affairs of state (that is, of "the republic") but to eat, to drink beer and white wine, to play games, to dance, and to enjoy "shows." A large room, about twenty-five by forty feet, was always a feature of the second floor, and served for dancing and "spectacles." There was lodging for the guests from other towns or counties, and every equivalent of the best modern clubs; members who needed aid were given it from the tribe treasury; there were funds for the decent burial of members who had not been able to save to that end. The regulations were severe: no one could belong who practised an "impure profession," such as that of executioner; a member was expelled if he had a "shameful disease"; one who married a girl born out of wedlock was heavily fined; and one who lived in concubinage was stricken from the lists.

And those who talk about "blue laws" these days may find comfort (if they can) in the fact that the Strasbourg citizens who did not hesitate to tell an emperor his place had the curfew "rung on them" every night at nine, when the steward shut up the drinks, put away cards and dice, and blew out the lights.

That is, he was supposed to do this. Perhaps he evaded the law sometimes. If not, the men of Strasbourg must have known (at least, some of them must!) how to get drunk and disorderly by a very early hour. For, a famous Strasbourg preacher of the fifteenth century declared that the *poëles* were haunts of all unrighteousness, where men gambled and drank away their earnings, ran into debt, neglected their work, and otherwise so conducted themselves that their wives and children "vegetated in misery."

Probably the *poële* was not infrequently abused. But certainly it served many good purposes.

When the magistrates wished to address the people, to calm their fears or arouse their enthusiasm, they went from *poële* to *poële* and talked to the groups there. In times of danger every man rushed to his *poële* and thence, with his fellows of the tribe, to the gates or bastions which were their designated stations.

To enter a tribe, one had to inscribe himself as an apprentice to that trade, pay a certain sum into the tribal treasury, and work three years in the establishment of a patron or master; he then paid again into the treasury and was designated a journeyman, after which he was free to make, whenever he felt himself able, such a demonstration of his craft as might win him, from the experts, the title of master-craftsman. Each craft or trade could have only so many masters; when that number was filled, no amount of money or influence sufficed to get another master accredited. Often the control of a prosperous trade was in the hands of a few families and passed from father to son therein for many generations.

"Close corporations" they were, indeed! A stranger could scarcely find work in a city like Strasbourg;

and if he could not find work at the end of three days, he had to leave town.

It was the tribes which elected the magistracy; and the magistracy made and enforced the laws.

As time went on, though, there had to be separate tribes constituted for the rich and for the nobles, because they had so little "show" when attached to a trade organization. And, later, when the tremendous changes that came with the sixteenth century had altered the life of all Europe, there flowed into Strasbourg a large new population which could not be assimilated into the tribes, could not become citizens, but paid for the protection of the city and the right of living there.

Erasmus, in a letter he wrote in 1514, expressed his admiration for the constitution of Strasbourg which, he said, was a fine mixture of aristocracy and democracy.

Of the celebrated councils (Council of Thirteen, Council of Fifteen, Council of Twenty-one) made up of senators and charged with different divisions of the administration, the proportions were these: the Council of Thirteen, dealing with foreign affairs, with peace and war, was composed of the mayor, four ex-mayors, and eight representatives of tribes; the Council of Eighteen, dealing with debts and inheritances not to exceed certain moderate sums, had six nobles and twelve commoners; the Council of Fifteen, dealing with larger finances, had five nobles and ten members of the trades.

So the aristocracy, although it complained loudly that it "had lost most of its privileges and would lose all if it continued to submit to the usurpations of the commons," was not without its fixed and more than proportionate representation in the government.

And life, in spite of inner discords and the bitter

warfare of the fifteenth century (wherein Alsace suffered terribly) seems to have been gay and luxurious enough to arouse the preachers of reform. The same Johann Geiler who wanted the *poëles* closed because men drank and gambled in them, cried out against the love of riches that he found in Strasbourg, against the luxurious dressing: the trailing robes of women, their high coiffures, their narrow shoes, and their "bosoms too uncovered."

It is food for reflection to find a twentieth century historian (Louis Battifol, *The Ancient Alsatian Republics*) remarking of Geiler: "His work, so interesting in many respects, gives none the less the impression of a race singularly strong, temperate, happy."

Geiler, who was somewhat on the order of Savanarola, preached at Strasbourg for thirty years. He was a distinguished scholar, an eloquent orator, impassioned and intrepid; but he failed to bring about in the Church those reforms for which he pleaded so earnestly. Reforms came, but not from within.

In order to make clearer to you what happened at Strasbourg (and elsewhere in Alsace) from this time on, I am going to ask you to refresh your memory with regard to things that were happening all over the world. The Renaissance was at hand; scores of influences which had been working since the Crusades became simultaneously so fruitful that there was an effect of suddenness about it all. We know, now, how gradual the growth had been; yet we continue to speak of a certain era as that of the world's "rebirth," because the effect was such.

One does not know where to begin in enumerating the events that marked the change; in every department of life there was an impulsion not only very strong

but somehow correlated to all the others and driving with them towards the same end: the breaking down of old barriers; the immeasurable extension of new horizons; the sudden realization, by millions of men, of THE WORLD—of a vast place full of limitless opportunities in mental and in geographical exploration, in new associations and channels of intercourse.

Men were sailing off in tiny caravels and discovering new worlds with few inhabitants and vast riches. Other men were exploring in the world of ideas, were reading the classics, finding themselves heirs of pregnant past periods. Nationalism had developed, and patriotic sentiment. Democracy had progressed from local to national affairs, from self-government in cities to self-government in the national assemblies or Estates-General. It no longer sufficed to know something of the affairs of one's neighbours; men, everywhere, wanted to know something of the affairs of their fellow countrymen, of the interests of other countries, of the way men lived and the things they knew in other times.

All these movements disquieted the Church, which was "dead set" against democracy and nationalism and discoveries and ideas. Particularly did she oppose the reading of the Greek and Latin classics; because, in addition to their paganism—which she no longer feared—they were saturate with a republicanism and a habit of free thought which seemed, to the Church, to threaten the foundations of the universe she had upbuilded with such strifeful effort.

However, men were determined to read; they were no less determined to read the forbidden classics. Books were few, and very, very dear. Most of the copyists were monks, and they copied only as the Church allowed. A few—monarchs and great nobles

—maintained copyists who lettered and illumined—on the precious parchment which was literally worth its weight in gold, and more than that—whatever was desired and could be found to copy. But this kept beyond the reach of many those eagerly desired books which broke down as if by magic the walls of narrow circumstance and disclosed to enraptured minds illimitable vistas of new ideas.

In 1420 "a gentleman of Mayence" (one hundred and twenty-five miles farther than Strasbourg in the Rhine's seaward course), driven from his native town by some dissensions of whose nature we are not very definitely informed, came to Strasbourg and took up his residence "in the vicinity of the convent of Saint-Arbogaste"—probably because of the monks' library.

His name was Johann Gansfleisch of Gutenberg. We don't even know where he got the "Gutenberg" part, by which he is known to fame, but suspect that it may have been his mother's name. When he left Mayence, some one there owed him three hundred and thirteen florins which he was not able to collect. Fourteen years after he had settled as Strasbourg he learned that the recorder of Mayence was in his adopted city; promptly Johann had that official arrested for the unpaid debt of one of his townsmen! The tenacity of purpose which kept Johann at the task of making movable types was, evidently, characteristic of him in other things. He was variously occupied while at Strasbourg; he cut gems and polished mirrors, besides experimenting with type—which latter he cut in wood, pierced and strung on a stout cord to keep the alignment. Gutenberg lived at Strasbourg for nearly a quarter of a century, and married a young lady of one of the noble families there. At least three Strasbourg-

ers were deeply concerned with him in the invention of printing, and there were, doubtless, many more who were interested in the labours of these four and in what they promised in the way of cheaper and more numerous books.

It was while Gutenberg was living at Strasbourg that there was founded at Schlestadt, twenty-seven miles southwest of Strasbourg, a Latin school which rapidly became famous and attracted hundreds of students. The founder of the school had been in Italy and there had become acquainted with the Greek and Latin classics then beginning to be read and studied with an enthusiasm destined to have tremendous results.

At Schlestadt many young men became so enamoured of the forbidden literature—Homer and Virgil, Horace and Pindar, Herodotus and Pliny, Plato and Cicero—that numbers of them went to Italy to continue their studies and, incidentally, to glimpse the dawn of the Renaissance, of the Golden Age of our Christian era. They, when they returned, and others with them, formed at Strasbourg the first literary society of modern Europe. Nowhere outside of Italy, in those days—not even at Paris—was there such culture in the classics, such zest for the new philosophy of humanism, such disposition to think, to compare, to challenge, instead of accepting without question and obeying without comprehending.

This was the time when Johann Geiler of Kayserberg was preaching in Strasbourg Cathedral (finished in 1439, after being more than four hundred years in construction) and stirring multitudes of people to indignation against the greed, the corruption, the scandalous living of clericals. He died without having seen any results of his crying in the wilderness. And

opposite the date of his birth he had written (it was found, after he had gone on): "Unhappy day." Perhaps he would not have been consoled had he lived to see the fruits of his sowing; perhaps it would have intensified his unhappiness could he have known that Rome would continue to turn a deaf ear to demands for reform; that those who were moved to protest must take themselves outside of the Church if they could not abide her wantonness; and that, in consequence of this, Europe would be drenched with blood, flayed with tortures, blackened with scorched ruins, for more than a hundred years.

However, within eight years after Geiler died, the citizens of Strasbourg affixed to the door of the Cathedral their protest against the sale of indulgences; ten years after Geiler died the new doctrines were being preached in the Cathedral; and twenty years after his death Lutheranism was the official religion of the Strasbourg republic.

In 1538 John Calvin came to Strasbourg, married there, and preached, wrote, and taught his reformed doctrines for three years. With him and following him, came no fewer than fifteen hundred Frenchmen, disciples of his faith.

Now, six years before Calvin's coming, Strasbourg had surrounded herself with a new, much larger and much more formidable city wall, and on one of the towers thereof had put this inscription, in Latin: "To protect the citizens and repulse enemies." What enemies? Perhaps they suspected. In 1535 Strasbourg sent deputies to Henry VIII of England to ask his aid against the Emperor Charles V. And when, in 1544, Charles, preparing to attack France, asked Alsace for men and money, Strasbourg replied that it

had neither for his purpose, since it did not fear invasion and did not feel obligated to defend the country.

Then began a long and bitter chapter in the history of Strasbourg. The Emperor demanded that Strasbourg withdraw from the league of Protestant German states; the senate "responded respectfully," but refused, and demanded that the Emperor stop his preparations for war against the Protestants. Charles went on with his preparations. Strasbourg appealed to France; but Francis I was hastening towards the voluptuary's end, and was past caring what happened to any one except himself. Moreover, the Protestant princes of the league were unable to agree among themselves, and their lack of solidarity cost them dear; for the Emperor defeated them at Mühlberg, in what was probably the most important victory of his life, and Strasbourg had to pay him a great indemnity. But the indemnity was not the worst of the proud little republic's share in that defeat. She had to send three deputies to Ulm to learn what were the Emperor's terms regarding freedom of worship. These terms were drawn up by one Lutheran and two Catholics. Charles's minister, Cardinal Granvelle, urged the Strasbourg deputies to sign the terms. The deputies refused, and returned to Strasbourg, where the senate approved their refusal. Charles notified Strasbourg that unless it accepted his terms within a month, he would force acceptance at the sword's point. He followed this ultimatum, in person, at the head of a large mounted force. Strasbourg, knowing herself unable to resist, submitted, and agreed to permit the mass again to be said in the city where it had not been heard in twenty-one years.

Then the Protestant princes of Germany sent their

appeal to Henry II, and Henry came to Saverne where three deputies from Strasbourg waited upon him and offered him supplies for his army. When Charles was advancing against Metz to retake it (or to attempt as much) Henry wrote to his "dear and good friends, the councillors and governors of the republic of Strasbourg" and begged them "affectionately" not to aid the Emperor, his enemy. "A singular request," comments Batiffol, "to be addressed to a town subject to the Emperor and by an enemy at war with him!"

When Henry IV was on the French throne, the relations between Strasbourg and his court were such that the German historians have made them a theme of reproach that "a German city should abandon itself to a French neighbour in the hope that the peace of Alsace would be better guarded by him than by the German authorities."

Henry had been dead nine years when Ferdinand, King of Bohemia, and grand-nephew of Charles V, mounted the imperial throne as Ferdinand II, determined to restore Catholicism to Germany. He found his empire divided between the Evangelical League and the Holy League (Catholic), Strasbourg being affiliated with the former; and he set about the extermination of Protestantism with a zeal kindled by his Jesuit training and fanned by his Jesuit confessors.

The Thirty Years' War resulted, and almost every state of Europe became involved. The story of what Alsace suffered in that war is a long one, upon which we can no more than touch here; and not the least bitter part of it was what she suffered at the hands of the Swedes who had been called by the Protestant princes of Germany to their aid.

Strasbourg gave a tremendous welcome to the soldiers

of Gustavus Adolphus, and while the Swedish king lived, things went well enough. But Gustavus was killed at the battle of Lützen, and his army behaved much as did the German army in Belgium and northern France in 1914. Ferdinand, in driving off the Swedes, treated the Alsatians no better than the Scandinavians.

It was in this desperate situation that the Alsatian people turned again to France, appealed to her, offered themselves to her, and asked her to become their protectorate.

Now, for many centuries France had been too occupied with other and urgent affairs to think much about Alsace. The struggle to survive feudalism; the Crusades; the Hundred Years' War; the arrogance and pretensions of Burgundy; the Italian campaigns —all these had kept France exceedingly busy. Whether she would some day have come of her own accord to consider her claims on "France of the East," or not, is idle to conjecture. The incontrovertible fact is that France of the East—Alsace and Lorraine—sought her protection.

In 1629 Strasbourg sent word to Richelieu, saying: "The spirits and the eyes of all in Alsace are turned toward France . . . . The people of Strasbourg will receive the aid of France with open arms."

Since the advent of Charles V upon the scene of European affairs, France had had but one policy with regard to Germany: in the proportion that Germany was united, France was unsafe. That was why Catholic kings of France repeatedly allied themselves with Protestant princes of Germany. The greatness of France depended on her ability to take or leave the dictates of the Vatican, and on keeping the Habsburgs

so hampered that they and the Vatican could not conspire to conquer and to crush France.

Richelieu was conspicuously sage in the way he handled this policy—proving himself Frenchman first and cardinal of Rome second.

It was probably due to Richelieu's influence that Louis XIII in person remonstrated with the Swedish ambassadors at his court and urged upon them that their soldiers could not continue atrocities in Alsace without answering therefor to him.

Then France was drawn into the Thirty Years' War, and her troops entered Alsace. This, as Richelieu reminded his King, was necessary to prevent Germany from invading France through Alsace; and also because the Alsatians had besought this occupation for their protection. But there was, as one may know who will study the state papers of Richelieu, no intention of prolonging the occupation of Alsace beyond the signing of a general peace pact among the nations at war.

When the long-awaited heir came to Louis XIII, Strasbourg wrote the King a letter promising to "show her loyalty and very humble service to Mgr. the Dauphin when His Majesty, full of years and of triumphs, shall have received the last crown, of glory and immortality."

"We have always," Strasbourg wrote in another letter of about that date, to one of the officers of the King, "been steadfast in our ancient duty and affection towards the crown and the person of the very Christian King, as the example was given us by our ancestors; and we are resolved to keep ourselves in the royal goodwill by an inviolable devotion to his service." In 1638 (the year following the writing of this letter)

Strasbourg authorized the French to recruit in the city soldiers for the French army. Ferdinand was furious; but Strasbourg paid no heed to him.

The proposition to annex Alsace was made to Louis XIII and Richelieu (and by them declined) by Josias Glaser, an important member of the Strasbourg magistracy. Glaser was the son of a professor of Greek in the Strasbourg Academy; he was wealthy, cultured, a Protestant (probably a Calvinist), a clever lawyer and diplomat. Glaser's plea to Louis XIII was discovered some years ago in the archives of Strasbourg.

It was Mazarin who first gave attention to the possibilities of annexation. This was after France had been occupying Alsace for twelve years; after she had "shed rivers of blood to defend German liberties" in the province and elsewhere. What Mazarin asked was that France, instead of Austria, become suzerain of Alsace, that the king of France become landgrave of Alsace. Nothing to be changed in Alsace; Alsace in no sense to be swallowed up by France; but everything to go on as before, except that the king of France would make himself responsible for the security of Alsace in its pursuit of happiness. To do this, the king of France would make himself a vassal of the German Empire.

Some of the German kings and princes warmly approved this plan. The king of Bavaria strongly urged its acceptance, as did the elector of Brandenburg. The Emperor opposed it. There was at least as much discussion, spread out over a long time, about the matter as there has recently been about Fiume. But the result of it all, when the treaty of Westphalia finally was signed, was a vaguely worded agreement to the effect that "the Emperor and the empire cede to France

all their rights in Alsace; they abandon all their rights, real and personal, on the soil and the subsoil, transfer full sovereignty, renounce all jurisdiction," etc., etc., *except* the following: and there followed a long, rambling, obfuscating lot of phrases about this abandonment not affecting Austrian sovereignty in Alsace!

Why anybody except a German ever signed this would be hard to understand if we were not so freshly aware how wearying a peace conference can be, so that plenipotentiaries might conceivably sign anything, at the end, rather than talk longer about it. And the Münster peace conference was in session for *years*, preparing the document so fruitful in wars.

"But it is useless," says Batiffol," to try to reconcile the unreconcilable, and these terms are unreconcilable; they are so because the Germans wanted them so."

Mazarin felt that Alsace was not ceded to France by the terms of the treaty, but he saw nothing that could be done except wait for developments. Moreover, the Fronde was just then beginning to menace not him alone, and his power in France, but the whole nation. Discontent with the sovereign supremacy of an Italian churchman, whose relations with the widowed queen-mother were rather more than suspected, was about to involve France in a disastrous civil war. So there was double policy in leaving Alsace very much to her own resources; which was done until Louis XIV grew up and began shaping his own policies. And he who later called himself "the State" was not good at waiting. He wanted to know exactly in what degree Alsace recognized his authority.

Now Alsace (as I have tried to indicate in this chapter) had never been good at recognizing any authority other than the will of her own sturdy people. The

more Louis pressed them, the stiffer their resistance became. They didn't want to "belong" to anybody. They had an idea that they could maintain, indefinitely, an almost sovereign independence, calling —when need arose—on either side of them for support.

Louis was persuaded to humour this attitude, for a while. And he did this the more readily because his hands were very full of difficulties with his Spanish cousins and "in-laws," and it mattered comparatively little to him how Alsace interpreted the treaty of Münster.

But when he became involved in the war with Holland and Germany, and learned that German troops were crossing the Rhine by the bridge at Strasbourg and spreading through Alsace, he had to deal summarily with his eastern province which set independence above loyalty. Turenne went there to give victorious battle to the Germans, and to die. Condé succeeded him. And after Condé, there was Crequi. Victory followed upon victory for the armies of France; and the treaties of Nimeguen, signed in 1678–79, put Louis on a pinnacle of greatness unrivalled in Europe since the heyday of his great-great-grandfather, Emperor Charles V. Also, the wars then concluded made him acutely aware how little security his realm could enjoy while there was any possibility of Germany using the Upper Rhine country (Alsace) through which to attack France; and it was certain that whatever power menaced France would always have imperial Germany's eager aid.

Therefore Louis adopted a firm policy with his Rhine province and exacted of all Alsatians the following oath: "We swear and promise to be faithful to the King our sovereign lord, to obey all that he shall

order, and to recognize his royal council as our court of last resort."

Only Strasbourg refused to take this oath. The citizens of that tiny republic may have been actuated, in this refusal, by stubborn pride, or they may have been fearful of the Emperor. Louis sent an army of thirty-five thousand men to remind Strasbourg that he was her "sovereign lord." The envoys of Louis to the courts of Europe were instructed by him to let it be known that the sending of this army was a pretext taken "in concert with the inhabitants and desired by them in order to protect them against the unmerited reproaches of their neighbours." The fact that Louis said this by no means proves it true; but both his behaviour subsequent to this act, and that of Strasbourg, argue the probability of what he said.

When deputies from Strasbourg came out to Illkirch, a distance of one league from the city, to meet Louvois, the King's minister of war and representative, they were told that they and their fellow citizens might write the terms of their capitulation; "that all the articles of it were accepted by the King in advance even of their framing, provided only that Strasbourg recognized the sovereignty of the King as granted by the treaties of Münster and Nimeguen." The senate of Strasbourg dictated the terms, which admitted the King of France "as their sovereign seigneur and protector"; and in return asked that Louis confirm all the ancient "privileges, rights, constitutions, statutes, including the use of the bridge across the Rhine, and grant liberty of conscience." The Cathedral alone was to be restored to the Catholics; the citizens were not to pay any contributions to the King but were to be left "in enjoyment of their revenues."

These conditions were accepted and signed on September 30, 1681; and in the oath Louvois took on behalf of France, he "avoided the word 'subject' and spoke instead of fidelity and obedience."

Early in October Louis made his solemn entry into Strasbourg, and was so well received, without any hostile manifestation, that on the tenth of that month one of the important citizens, Brackenhoffer, wrote to a friend: "God has worked out all for the best."

On October 20th the bishop and chapter of Strasbourg were reinstated in the Cathedral. This Louis did because two thirds of the Alsatians were Catholics and he deemed it their right to have the bishop regnant in the Cathedral. The bishop was a German, a Hohenzollern on his mother's side, and one of six brothers most of whom were great personages either at the court of the Emperor or of the Elector of Bavaria. These relationships, however, did not prevent the bishop from being a sincere friend of France.

Louis founded in Strasbourg a college of Jesuits and a convent of Visitation nuns, for the education of young men and girls whose parents desired them to be instructed in French. But the Lutheran religion continued to be respected, and every Alsatian was encouraged to believe and to worship as he wished.

Moreover, when Louis appointed a royal representative to keep him advised as to how the Strasbourgers were managing their affairs, he named a Strasbourg jurisconsult and philologist, Ulrich Obrecht, a Lutheran.

The policy of Louis with Alsace was one of non-interference, religious or political; even the abuses which the people had suffered in the old régime he modified gradually, so that they should have no sense of being "made over," even benevolently. He kept

few garrisons there, but ordered many public improvements at a minimum cost to the taxpayers; he encouraged agriculture; he deprived the nobility of many of their privileges and he re-distributed these among the plain folk; he provided justice for the small as well as for the great; he abolished the use of certain instruments of torture which he (or his royal council acting for him) declared barbarous; no effort was made, or allowed, to "Frenchify" the inhabitants, every one of whom was free to follow his own bent, speak the tongue of his preference, worship as his conscience dictated. Even the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had no effect on Alsace. The bigotry of Maintenon was not permitted to cross the Vosges.

This security and prosperity, this respect of their dignity and their preferences, won for France the willing loyalty of Alsace, and that within a very few years.

At the time of the union with France, Alsace had about two hundred and seventy-five thousand inhabitants—two thirds Catholics, and the other third Protestants except for thirty-six hundred Jews. A century later, although fifty-three years of wars had drained Alsace of great numbers of her people (as was true of Germany, and of the rest of France, and of other countries) her population was six hundred and twenty-five thousand—the majority of the men property owners and in comfortable circumstances; scarcely any of them rich. To be the chief magistrate of Strasbourg, one had to give proof of being a tiller of the soil. Strasbourg continued to be a republic, governed by its constitution of the Middle Ages. But as time wore on it was the form of their ancient government that they preserved rather than the spirit. Elections lapsed; office-holders not only held office for life, but they

frequently bequeathed it; and, as little was done in these offices, nobody minded who held them. More and more devolved, by tacit consent, upon the King's representative, who was generally an Alsatian and who gradually became the people's "man," as much as he was the "King's man."

When the Revolution came, Strasbourg elected as mayor the man who had been the prætor of Louis XVI; his name was Friedrich de Dietrich; and it was in his house that the *Marseillaise* was first sung.

When the Bastille fell, Alsace rejoiced; the magistracy of Strasbourg sent an address to the National Assembly, declaring, "We esteem ourselves only too fortunate in our participation in the glory of the name of France." A week later the citizens met and signed a declaration saying: "We have the honour to be French; we are of one mind, one spirit, with you; we shall adhere to the decrees of the National Assembly."

It was the next year (1790) when someone set up in the middle of the bridge crossing the Rhine at Strasbourg, a tricolour flag and a "standard with the proud device": "Here begins the country of liberty."

Germany's repeated calls to Alsace to consider herself still a part of the Empire were unheeded save by a negligible few whose interests lay that way. When war against France was declared by the Emperor on April 20, 1792, one fourth of the total adult population of Alsace rushed to arms to defend France. Fathers took their places beside their sons. All hearts were aflame. Only a river separated these sons of France from the country of the enemy. But patriotism burns on frontiers as nowhere else. It was in the white heat of that fire that the *Marseillaise*, the great hymn of freedom, was born.

Lieutenant Rouget de L'Isle was a frequent visitor to the home of Mayor Dietrich, where the young officer, well born, socially well dowered, was a favoured intimate of the little group that gathered often in the salon of the mayor's house, for conversation, music, and other fireside pleasures.

On the evening of April 23, 1792, nothing was talked of in that gathering except the war news just come to Strasbourg. Austria was going to put down the Revolution in France, was she? Nowhere was her intention learned with fiercer indignation than at Strasbourg, for so many generations a Habsburg fief. The men of Strasbourg were clamouring for places with the other defenders of France. They were going to march, they and their fellows from other cities of Alsace, almost immediately. In the Dietrich home, where music was deemed the only adequate expression for such emotions as were hastening all heart-beats then, they talked, that night, of what strains the soldiers of liberty might march to as they went to face the invading foe, the representative of old tyrannies. No air that anybody knew seemed right for this tremendous occasion; one by one the martial strains were tried over, and found waiting.

Men going to battle in such glorious conditions could not be voiced by any of the old songs made for soldiers of a king. This was to be a new warfare, such as the old world had never known. It must have a new hymn, a new chant of consecration.

Whether someone suggested to Rouget de L'Isle that he write a marching song for the departing army of the Rhine, or whether the urge came to him from within his own heart after he left the Dietrich salon, we do not know. He was a violinist of some talent,

wrote verses, and occasionally composed airs. When he returned to his lodging that night, it was not to sleep; and before dawn he had completed, words and music, what he called *The Chant of Departure of the Army of the Rhine*. At a very early hour he presented himself at the home of Dietrich, where he found the mayor in his garden tending his lettuces, which he gladly left to go indoors and hear the new composition.

"Great!" he cried. "Just the thing! This evening we will reassemble all who were here last night; and you shall sing your song for them."

Perhaps you have seen the painting of that scene; if you haven't, look for it when you go to the Gallery of the Louvre. (And when you leave the Louvre, walk west and take another look at the statue of Strasbourg, by Pradier, from which the crape and mourning wreaths were so jubilantly torn in November, 1918; you may be doubly interested therein if you know that Juliet Drouet was the model for that symbolic figure, and that the time when she was sitting to Pradier for it was just about the time she first met Victor Hugo, whose heart she ruled thereafter for fifty years.)

Also, next time you hear *La Marseillaise*, note (if you never have before) that it contains not a suggestion of aggressive warfare, of battle for possessions; it is to *defence* that this great hymn calls "the children of the country"—to defence against that bloody tyrant who seeks to deprive them of their liberties and to desecrate their homes. The sentiments it expresses are in no sense peculiarly French, save as France is so closely identified with liberties; no country is mentioned; no special tyrant is designated. Lieutenant Franck E. Schoell, Alsatian, soldier of France, scholar,

man of letters, tells me that while he was a prisoner in a German prison camp, the German guards mutinied—and their declaration of insurrection was the singing of *La Marseillaise;* likewise, when the U-boat crews at Kiel revolted, it was *La Marseillaise* they sang. It is the hymn of free men ready to fight in defence of their human rights; and it was born there in Strasbourg in the depths of an April night when the tread of Austria's advancing hosts must have been all but audible to an ear that listened while the world slept.

Of all else that might be said about Strasbourg I must take space, here, for only a little, briefly told.

During the wars of the Revolution and of the Empire, Alsace gave sixty-two generals to lead the armies of France—among them Kellermann and Kléber. On the Arch of Triumph in Paris, twenty-eight Alsatian names figure among those who aided Napoleon in his victories. Alsace remained ardent for the Emperor until the *Bellerophon* had carried him from France's shores to exile. When he was gone, and the Bourbon monarchy was back in power, Germany thought the moment favourable for re-taking Alsace. But the Alsatians thought otherwise; they hooted at Prussian officers who appeared in the streets of Strasbourg; and their leading newspaper boldly warned the Germans that if they succeeded, in the chaotic affairs of Europe then, in re-acquiring Alsace, the Alsatians would quit the country, leading their flocks and leaving smoking villages behind them. To this the German press replied charging the Alsatians with de-Germanization. "We are not Germans, but French," the Alsatians retorted.

In 1848 Strasbourg celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of those treaties of Westphalia (Münster) which united her to France; and the Mayor in his

address, spoke as follows: "It is no longer necessary for us to make a solemn and public declaration of our inviolable devotion to France. But if Germany still cherishes chimerical illusions, if she still finds in the persistence of the German language among our people an indication of sympathy for or attraction toward her, how she deceives herself! Alsace is as French as Brittany, Flanders, and the Basque provinces, and she is determined to remain so!"

Her determination, alas! had no weight against Germany's desire of her. Her sons rose, almost as one man, to defend her in 1870. But in vain. On August thirteenth German shells began to fall on Strasbourg; day after day the bombardment continued, directed at the homes of citizens and at churches and public buildings.

On the twenty-fourth one of the churches went up in leaping flames; and on the same day the art museum and two public libraries were destroyed, with all their treasures. Two days later the Cathedral roof was set on fire and shots from German guns shattered much of its priceless old stained glass and demolished much of its stone carving. The Palace of Justice went, and the prefecture, the municipal theatre and hospital; more than six hundred houses were burned, three hundred civilians were killed, and more than two thousand wounded in six weeks. On September twenty-seventh the white flag of surrender was hoisted on the Cathedral; and the next day a sobbing multitude of heart-broken people cried: "*Vive la France,*" as the French garrison marched out into captivity. It was a little more than forty-eight years later that Strasbourg, weeping, waving, welcomed the soldiers of France in her streets again.

The protests of Alsace and Lorraine against German seizure have been so much quoted during the last few years that I will not repeat them here. And the story of those eight-and-forty years of bondage is so long, so detailed, so harrowing that I will not embark on it, since it is the phase whereon American and English readers have been most fully informed since 1914. I have chosen, rather, in writing this chapter about Strasbourg, to deal principally with those earlier and less familiar phases of her history upon which the Germans found their claims to her, and which we must know if we are to comprehend why their contentions are insupportable. The impassioned literature of the captivity is so thrilling, so noble, that I have the greatest difficulty to refrain from quoting from it; nothing could be more fitting as a conclusion to these pages about French towns and their martyrdom for mankind's liberties; but to allow one's self a beginning of such quotation is to invite despair—there is so much that ought in nowise to be left out!

Perhaps, after all, I cannot do better than to let, not a brilliant literary artist, but a simple old peasant soldier of France sum up for you, in conclusion, the spirit of France, as I have tried to express it in these pages.

He was an Alsatian. He fought for France in '70; and since then he had prayed God, daily, that he might live to see the day when France should gather her lost children to her warm, mother breast again. The Germans ordered most of his ways; but they could not order what he said to God when he lifted up his heart in prayer. Nor—although he knew the dreadful penalty that would be meted to him were he found out—could the Germans prevent him from treasuring

his faded old soldier cap. The weary years of war wore on, and the tide of life ebbed till it was very low. When the old man realized that he could not live to wear his cap as a part of his welcome to the French troops when they should come marching in, he determined that at least he would die with it on. So be besought his wife to fetch it from its hiding-place.

"Now fetch me, I pray you, Jean-Louis," he said, when he had put the cap on.

Jean-Louis was an old soldier-comrade and neighbour, who likewise waited and prayed.

"Look here," the dying man charged him, "I know I cannot last much longer. The only thing that worries me is that when our French come back I shall not be here to see them. Now, I want you to promise me to do what I ask, so I may die with an easy mind: when I am buried, mark the place in the cemetery, so you will know it well. Then, as soon as ever the soldiers of France march in, come to my grave, dig a hole right down to my body, and shout to me:

"'They have come!'"

THE END

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